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OF THE

Visitation Order

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED FROM APPROVED SOURCES AND DEDICATED TO THEIR PUPILS

BY THE

SISTERS OF THE VISITATION OF HOLY MARY

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

1855-1905

NEW YORK
CHRISTIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
PUBLISHING COMPANY
26 BARCLAY STREET
1905

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✠ CHARLES E. McDONNELL, D.D.
Bishop of Brooklyn.

Dedication.

TO THE PUPILS OF THE VISITATION, WHO,
DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS, HAVE LEARNED
LESSONS OF PIETY AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE SCHOOL
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE GENTLE BISHOP OF
GENEVA, THESE LIFE-STORIES OF THE HOLY
FOUNDERS AND SAINTLY SISTERS OF THE ORDER,
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THE
VISITANDINES OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

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INTRODUCTION.

Somebody has said that he who causes an additional blade of grass to grow, is a benefactor of mankind. If this be true, how much more deeply indebted the world is to one who coaxes a flower of virtue to spring into beautiful and fragrant existence! The one but feebly adorns for a little while the inanimate face of unthinking nature; the other beautifies and embellishes forever the immortal spirit of God's greatest creature. An ignoble worm may destroy the one; no power less than the imperial will of man can destroy the other.

The object of this little book is to grow spiritual flowers in the souls of its readers. It aims, by encouraging right living, to beget within them the peace of which the angels sang; to help them to diffuse happiness in their homes and to stimulate them to be brave and practical friends of God, as they live out their lives in a vicious world. What

influence inclines us more strongly to live our faith, to hold our light aloft amid the darkness around us, that others may see its shining and be guided home to God, than the example of those of our own kind and age and circumstances? When we see the foot-prints they have left, are we not willing and glad to follow?

The lives that are outlined in the following pages have been selected and grouped with this dominant idea in mind. Through the luminous white veil that envelops them the outlines of humanity can be plainly seen. We are encouraged when we notice that, like ourselves, they were "of the earth earthy;" that, like us, they felt the sting of self-denial and self-control; that, somewhat as we do, they stumbled and sometimes fell; and we are astonished to see them raised and made strong, courageous, victorious, saintly, by the every-day means so familiar to us,—prayer, penance, and especially by the smiling and sympathetic Friend in the God-given Eucharist.

Here, we have the attractive Saint Francis de Sales—the gentleman Saint—as considerate and as human as can be; the practical, motherly and queenly Saint Jane Frances de Chantal, whom we

feel we might have met and saluted, yesterday, and with them, fruits of the glorious tree they planted, are happy school girls that ripened into happier and holier maturity.

We are too apt to think of the Saints as of a generation differing from our own; of their virtues as impossible for us to practise. We forget that they went on and up one step at a time, the wounded Hand of Christ clasped in theirs, guiding and sustaining them. The divine companionship made the rocky climb easy and delightful, until they reached a level, high above the dark, damp valley, in which we dwell. Standing there, as free from the slavery of the flesh as are the vigorous mountain breezes; breathing in the pure, exhilarating air, that is untainted by the malarial poisons of earth, they saw within easy reach of them the shining walls and glittering turrets of the enchanting City of God and the heavenly harmonies they heard, were echoed in their hearts.

God would gladly do the same for us, but the pity of it is, we will not put our hand in His; the Wound seems to frighten us. And yet we are forced to deny ourselves; we suffer misery; we submit to

the mastery of others,—all this, to secure some passing material advantage. We are very like the savages Columbus met on landing here:—we barter away good, solid gold and receive in return broken bits of colored glass. Did we ever do for God what we do for man, we would make rather respectable Saints ourselves. May this volume start us on our way!

On the feast of the Presentation, 1620, Saint Francis de Sales preached on the text: "Look and make according to the model, which thou hast seen upon the mountain." (Exodus xxv.) The Saint said: "In the old law, God commanded Moses to place between the altar of holocaust and the altar of perfumes, a basin of brass to be filled with water, and also that the basin be embellished with mirrors such as the Hebrew women used. The early Fathers assert that the basin represents the doctrine of the gospels. The mirrors represent the examples of the Saints. May we not say that the lustre of their lives adds new beauty to the gospels? Again, may not their lives serve as mirrors to be constantly kept before our eyes, that we may see what virtues we need and what example we should follow?"

But little claim to originality is made for the volume now presented. The "Jubilee Gems" have been gathered here and there, from sources that are rich, rare and reliable and have been merely grouped into a new combination. They have been set with the fixed purpose of pleasing, attracting, and influencing the young. Gifted authors who, during the past two centuries and a half, have written of the holy ones of the Visitation Order, have been placed under tribute. Facts that illustrate especially the early years of these saintly lives, have been culled from Monseigneur de Ségur; Monseigneur Bougaud, Bishop of Laval; Monseigneur Languet; the Abbé Daras; the Reverend Oblate Fathers of Saint Francis of Sales; Miss Emily Bowles; A. de Margerie; and the Visitandines of Paray-le-Monial, of Roselands, England, and of Marseilles, France.

Somewhat as a lens draws rays of light from various directions and brings them to a brilliant focus, so the compilers of this work have gathered information from these luminous minds of various times and places and have condensed it into concise, animated and instructive form.

There is a lamentable lack, to-day, of books suit-

able for Catholic school premiums, The "Jubilee Gems" will help to supply that lack. It will, moreover, do much towards supplementing and crystallizing Catholic training. It will be an object lesson in the practice, by the students of the ordinary, as well as of the extraordinary virtues.

The Visitandines of Brooklyn fittingly celebrate their fiftieth year of Catholic teaching by giving to the general reading public one more good book. It may be profitably read by all, and there is abundant room for it. Though hundreds of books are published every day, but few of them indeed are safe and helpful. This is an age of omnivorous reading; it is also an age of tainted literature. Mercenary publishers cater to the public taste, which they themselves have vitiated. Every good book added to the meagre list is a positive and a permanent blessing. When placed in the hands, particularly of the young, it may change the character of a lifetime, just as a pebble near the source of a little stream may determine the course of a mighty river.

There are libraries in plenty and they constantly increase in number and size, but libraries like drug

stores have on their shelves much that is harmless and more that is hurtful—deadly poison of various kinds. There is this difference: the druggist deals out his poison only by prescription and in small quantities, while young and old help themselves, often unwittingly, to the deadly dose the library supplies.

A book is sure to hurt or help. There is no companionship more absorbing than that between a reader and what he reads. Other companionships are in the main external, but in this one, the will and the understanding carry the ideas, be they good or bad, to the inner sanctuary of the soul, and the memory keeps them there.

Therefore, do we wish a cordial God-speed to the "Jubilee Gems." Its golden goodness is sure to beget goodness that is golden, wherever it goes. May its career be long, active, wide-spread and fruitful.

E. W. McCarty.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S RECTORY, BROOKLYN,
FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES, 1905.

JUBILEE GEMS

OF THE

VISITATION ORDER.

LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES.

CHAPTER FIRST.

HIS BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

EACH Saint has his own especial characteristic, as each flower in a garden has its own peculiar perfume. Meekness is the predominant trait of Saint Francis of Sales. This virtue it is which gives such a charm to his character, that won for him in his life-time, and wins for him to-day, such incomparable influence over souls.

It was on the twenty-first of August, 1567, that Francis was born at the castle of Sales. His father, the Lord of Nouvelles, had married Mademoiselle de Sionnaz, who brought him as her dowry, the rich domain of Boisy, on condition that he would take

the name. This is why his parents are known in history as Monsieur and Madame de Boisy. When this first child was given them, they had been married six years, but his birth was followed by that of twelve other children, five of whom died in infancy. He was baptized the very day of his birth, and when he was brought back to his mother, the pious countess uttered these beautiful words: "My child, you have become the companion of the Angels, the brother of the Infant Jesus, the temple of the Holy Ghost, a member of the Catholic Church: this is a token of divine love. You must be consecrated to God."

Francis grew up like an angel among men, meek, peaceable, modest and kind and, after God, it was to his good mother that he owed all these beautiful qualities. In his babyhood, Madame de Boisy always dressed and undressed him herself; she allowed him neither elegant clothes, nor dainty food, nor any thing that could make him effeminate, while she watched over his health with all a mother's tenderness.

At an early age, she taught her child to love God, by making him familiar with what this great God

has condescended to do for man in the creation, redemption and sanctification. Francis understood this language of love, and his first consecutive words were: "God and my mother love me much." Francis showed his precocious virtue on the occasion of two slight faults, the details of which have been handed down to us. One day, the boy noticed lying on the ground the vest of a workman employed at the castle, to the button-hole of which was attached a ribbon of bright, fantastic colors. His childish eyes being captivated by the beauty of the ribbon, he took it. Coming for his vest, the workman immediately missed the ribbon, for which he asked everyone about the castle. The count, on learning the fact, questioned Francis, who frankly acknowledged, without offering any excuse, that he had taken the ribbon; then he fell on his knees and begged his father to forgive him. All present wept with emotion and united their entreaties with those of Francis; but the Count, knowing what fatal results might follow a first fault of this kind, was inflexible, and gave the lad a severe whipping, telling him that if the punishment was so slight, it was because the fault was the first and had been acknowl-

edged. He added that a repetition of the act would receive still more rigorous chastisement. The correction was so beneficial that never again did Francis take even a fruit from the garden. He himself relates that passing the kitchen, one day, he saw the cook taking some delicious little cakes out of the oven. Though his parents had forbidden him, he went into the kitchen and asked for one of the cakes, which was put, burning hot, into his hand, yet his greed was greater than his pain, he said, and he kept the cake rather than throw it away.

As soon as Francis could lisp a few words, his mother taught him to pronounce the sacred Names of Jesus and Mary and the words of the Sign of the Cross. Later, he took special pleasure in repeating the Our Father and the Hail Mary, and, having a quick and active mind, always wanted to learn something new, which his good memory enabled him to retain. His next lesson was the Catechism, which was taught him orally, and which he desired to communicate to other children, whom he assembled by the ringing of a little bell. Then Francis arranged them in a circle round him and repeated, with appropriate gestures, the questions that had

just been taught him, making the children repeat them until they knew them perfectly.

Sometimes, this child of five was carried away by his zeal and, if he happened to meet a Huguenot, he would, without the least human respect, prove his errors by the Catechism. Sometimes the boy's attacks were so violent, that it was necessary to lock him in a room, when a reformer came to visit his parents. Thus were foreshadowed the apostolic labors, he was, as priest and bishop, to accomplish with so much glory and success. We read that, in his zeal, the young saint was a support even to his own mother. Seeing her in sorrow, he would say, by way of consolation: "Dear Mother, let us have recourse to God; He will help us." Sometimes, hearing her say, in difficulties: "Lord, come to my aid!" Francis would answer: "Well said, dear Mother; say it very often, say it from the bottom of your heart, and you shall see that the good God *will* come to your aid."

The pious Countess was accustomed to read to her son the Lives of the Saints and to explain to him how he could and ought to imitate each saint. This awakened within him an ardent desire for sanctity,

and Francis would interrupt the reading with—"Mamma, I also desire to become a saint." Her eyes full of tears, the mother would reply: "Dear child, if your desire is sincere, God will grant you the grace." Never was Francis heard to utter a word contrary to the truth, and he would rather be punished, even for a fault of inadvertence, than tell a lie.

There was observable in Francis, at two years of age, tender compassion and great love for the poor. He gave everything he had, especially to children, and then, crying bitterly, would allow his nurse no rest until further means had been found to relieve the needy. He would even leave table to carry to a poor person at the door, a part of his meal, and when he had nothing to give, he would entreat his father and mother to assist the unfortunate. Sometimes, to try his patience, they would not at once accede to his request, when, so great was his compassion, that big tears would fall from his eyes, and cease only when alms were given. This charity was evinced towards every one. The old records tell us that once one of his servants bought for him a pair of gloves, at a much lower price than had at first been

asked and told Francis that, as usual, the merchant complained of having sold them at a loss. The child was so affected by this, that he paid the shopkeeper, from his own purse, the sum he said he had lost.

On another occasion, in crossing a bridge that had been newly repaired, Francis noticed that his servant did not pay the toll demanded by the workman, probably because the nobility were exempt from it. "My God," said he, "these poor men work by the sweat of their brow, to do us service, and should we pay them nothing? It is not just!" and opening his purse, he paid the small amount so graciously and amiably, that it doubled the value of the deed.

CHAPTER SECOND.

STUDENT LIFE.

WHEN Francis was six years old, his father sent him to the college of La Roche, a small town, two leagues from the castle, where he learned to read and write; and, two years later, to the college of Annecy,

to study Latin. Here he remained for five years, and here, he made his First Communion and received Confirmation from the hands of Monseigneur Ange Justiniani, who called the boy "the visible angel of the country." From that time, he communicated first, every first Sunday of the month, and afterwards, every week. When asked the motive of his frequent Communions, he answered: " I communicate for the same reason that I often converse with my master, who can always teach me something; now Jesus is the Master of the science of the saints, and I often approach Him, that He may teach me this science, because it would little matter for me to be well educated, and even learned, if I do not become a saint." At the Holy Table, Francis acquired fresh zeal for the practice of virtue and the needful strength against temptations. To render himself worthy of this signal favor, he strove to moderate the great vivacity of his mind, to overcome his hasty and irascible temper, and to subject to grace the movements of his heart. Thus he acquired invariable meekness and that peace of soul, without which one cannot advance on the road to perfection.

Having finished the study of Literature, Francis

was sent by his father to pursue his Humanities at the college of Clermont in Paris, then conducted by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. He was accompanied by the Reverend Abbé Déage, his tutor, and George Rolland, his valet, who was to serve him until his death.

The young student's industry and application enabled him to pass successfully through the course of Rhetoric. He edified his master by his eminent virtue, while, in the eyes of his companions, he was a model of perfection. When they saw him coming, they would say: "Let us be good; here is the Saint." Often Francis took walks with his fellow-students to quiet groves outside the city, in order to pray or sing the Litany of our Lady. On beautiful Spring mornings, especially, he loved to climb the hills with his friends and raise their hearts above the beauties of nature to their Creator. He would say: "Let us begin by praising and blessing the Lord, for it is He who has given us this lovely day, these fine trees, charming prairies, beautiful birds, and the limpid streams, whose gentle murmur is so attractive.

A little incident belonging to this period of our Saint's life, evidences his ardent zeal for souls.

Francis invited to breakfast with him a young and very pious friend, who arrived promptly at the hour agreed upon. Francis met him with the words: "Dear friend, I am going to the church of the Jesuit Fathers to confess and communicate, will you go with me?" The proposal was unexpected, but, after a moment's hesitation, it was accepted; the two young men went to church and performed their devotions. On their way home, Francis said to his friend: "That was the feast to which I invited you; let us now go and feed our bodies." They spent the whole day together, so pleasantly and so devoutly, that the guest was perfectly satisfied with the hospitality that he received.

Francis was as willing to share the troubles as the joys of his friends and on one occasion he was, at his own entreaty, feruled instead of his cousin, Gaspard de Sales, and on another, he received a violent blow from the impatient master, for pleading the cause of a servant, who had committed some fault. The vacations were spent in forming to virtue the innocent souls of his brothers, Janus, Louis and John, their mother encouraging the boys to imitate Francis, follow his advice, and do all that

he would tell them. The closest intimacy existed between Francis and Louis, who wanted to follow his brother everywhere and imitate him in every thing; they were inseparable and animated one another to the practice of virtue.

From his earliest childhood, Francis had been taught to revere Mary, the Mother of God, and his love of her grew with his growth, inspiring him with many holy practices in her honor. During his student life at Paris, he was fond of visiting her shrine in the church of Saint-Etienne-des-Grès, and here it was that he was freed from a dangerous temptation, to which, in order to strengthen his courage, our Lord permitted the pious youth to be subjected. He was pursued by the fixed idea of his eternal damnation, in consequence of which he lost sleep and appetite, but increased his prayers and austerities, while the evil one never ceased whispering in his ear: "You will be damned!" "Lord," then exclaimed Francis, "if I may not love Thee in the other life, at least grant me Thy love, while I am on earth." After undergoing this torture for six weeks, Francis one day entered the church of Saint-Etienne-des-Grès and, after having recited the

Memorare before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, venerated even in our time, in the chapel of the Ladies of Saint Thomas of Villanova, renewed his Vow of Chastity. Then the veil that obscured his mind fell at once, the trial was at an end.

Hardly were his literary and scientific studies completed at Paris, in 1586, when Francis, after a short stay with his family, proceeded to the University of Padua, to study law. There, his ever increasing piety won for him all hearts; some libertines, however, whom neither his example nor his counsels had been able to bring back to the right path, resolved to deprive him of general esteem by making him pass for a coward. One evening, several of them lay in ambush in a deserted street, through which he had to pass, and fell upon him, as if to take his life. The holy youth, using the right of lawful self-defence, drew his sword, put himself on the defensive, and threatened to strike them, if they did not depart. Intimidated by this unexpected attitude, these libertines immediately withdrew and henceforth allowed Francis to pass unmolested.

A serious illness interrupted his studies for a time, and it was even thought that he would die. When

the patient was in the greatest danger, he expressed to Mr. Déage the desire that, after his death, his body might be handed over to the surgeons, to serve for the study of anatomy. God, touched by this humility and destining Francis for a high position in His Church, restored him to health almost suddenly.

On September fifth, 1591, Francis, having received the diploma of Doctor of Laws, went to visit Rome and Loretto. Being miraculously preserved from danger of death at Rome, Francis owed also to divine Providence his not being buried in the sea. As he was preparing to go from Ancona to Venice, a Neapolitan lady claimed that the vessel, in which Francis had already paid his passage, had been reserved for herself and her suite. In spite of the remonstrances of the young man, the lady insisted with so much haughtiness and arrogance that the Saint felt obliged to yield. The ship had scarcely left the shore, when a storm suddenly arising, submerged the felucca and all its passengers, while Francis could not but bless God, who turns all things to the good of those that love Him.

CHAPTER THIRD.

FRANCIS'S VOCATION. HIS APOSTOLIC LABORS.

FRANCIS was now almost twenty-five, and after only a short stay in Venice, he returned to his family in Savoy, from whom he had been absent several years. His intelligence, his scholarly attainments and even the beauty of his person, caused indescribable joy to his parents and Mr. de Boisy, convinced that his son would be the glory of his family and his country, wished him to be admitted as Counsellor to the Parliament of Savoy, but his mother, who read better her child's soul, felt that he would be a great saint, the salvation of many souls, and the glory of the Church. Francis, always submissive, set out for Chambery, where after the usual preliminaries, he was received and proclaimed advocate. He would have been happy, too, to fulfil the duties of his new office, if God had not called him to a more perfect state and prepared for him another and more divine Tribunal. From the time of his First Communion, Francis

had had but one thought, to live for God alone and to consecrate himself to Him in the priesthood. Shortly after, he had obtained permission from his father, who looked upon it as a childish fancy, to receive the tonsure, the first of the Minor Orders, in the church of Clermont, on the twentieth of September, 1578. Thenceforth, Francis considered himself as betrothed to the holy Church of God, and his life became but a long preparation for the sacred ministry. After his admission to Parliament, a prodigy three times renewed, convinced him that God's time had now come and, after earnest prayer and wise counsel, he determined to ask his father's consent to enter the priesthood. Far different were Mr. de Boisy's projects for the future of his gifted son: a brilliant establishment in the world, with a wife suitable to his rank and position was to be the first step towards their accomplishment. The next was to be the acceptance of the senatorship, now offered to Francis, so everything seemed to conspire against the realization of the Saint's lofty aspirations and the obtaining of the much desired permission. Louis de Sales, a cousin of Francis and Canon of the Chapter of Geneva, understanding the difficulties of

the situation, resolved to overcome, by the acquisition of a rare honor, the opposition that he knew Mr. Boisy would make to his son's vocation. The office of Provost having become vacant, Louis begged the Bishop of Geneva, Monseigneur Claude de Granier, to bestow this position on the young Saint, whom his Lordship had long known and admired.

Entering into the designs of Providence, Monseigneur de Granier eagerly acceded to the proposal and having obtained the approbation of the Holy See, presented the Pope's Bull to Francis. Accompanied by his cousin, Francis presented himself to his father, and falling on his knees, begged him to grant the one thing in the world that was the object of his hopes and desires, the consecration of himself to God in the priesthood. Mr. de Boisy, deeply affected, at first made some objections, but, yielding to the entreaties of Francis and the tears of his wife, he generously made his sacrifice and blessed the son, whom he gave to God, to the poor, to the Church, and who, by his sanctity, was to render his name illustrious with a glory far superior to all human glory.

The holiness of Francis was so universally recognized, that no one protested against the dignity of

Provost, with which, while still so young, he had just been invested. Welcomed with delight by the Chapter and people of Annecy, Francis received marked testimonies of the love and esteem of his Bishop, who, divinely enlightened, saw in this young man, his immediate successor. The Bishop at once conferred on him the Sub-deaconship and six months later, on December eighteenth, 1593, ordained him priest.

Prepared for the sacred ministry by so many virtues, Francis devoted himself without reserve to the service of souls, visiting by preference the poor and the destitute, whom he consoled and fortified with exquisite kindness. Seeking out those whom others rejected, those whose sores rendered them most repulsive, he cared for and cheered them. Towards sinners especially, he showed himself compassionate; he brought them back to God, by his meekness and the ascendency of his virtues; he went so far even as to take upon himself the penance due to their crimes, leaving them no care but that of repentance. Giving himself without reserve, he preached the divine Word almost every day, multiplying his efforts in regard to the Protestants,

whom the schism of Luther and Calvin had robbed of the true Faith and whom his discourses brought back to the Catholic Church, preaching no less zealously before a scanty congregation, as before the largest audiences.

Soon Providence opened to Francis a vaster field, thickly strewn with thorns and briars, but which his toils and tears were to render fruitful. This field was the province of the Chablais, of which the cities, taken in turn by the Bernese and the Duke of Savoy, had shortly before again fallen under the dominion of the Duke. The inhabitants, wavering for sixty years between truth and error, had finally determined to side with error and Calvinism exercised over all its despotic sway.

The duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and the Bishop of Geneva, desirous to bring back to the true Fold this erring people, were seeking an apostle to evangelize them. Francis, seeing only the trouble and the dangers of this undertaking, offered himself to his Bishop, and in spite of the tears and remonstrances of his father, whose opposition his generous ardor once more overcame, he set off without delay on the mission intrusted to him.

It was at the fortress of Allinges, a strong castle, a few miles from Thonon, that Francis at first fixed his abode, going every morning to Thonon, to assemble the small number of Catholics who resided there. Hardly was his coming known, than the Protestant ministers roused the people against him. One evening, when Francis was returning to the fortress of Allinges, two fanatics, sword in hand sprang upon him. He immediately advanced towards them, spoke to them with meekness and superhuman authority, excited them to repentance and opened to them his arms. The would-be assassins fell on their knees and promised conversion.

After this adventure, in which the saintly priest nearly lost his life, M. de Boisy, uniting his entreaties to those of the Baron d' Hermance, governor of the castle of Allinges, besought him not to continue to expose himself in this way, but the Saint would not listen to them. Strong in God, for whom he toiled and suffered, he resolved, on the contrary, in order to render his mission more efficacious, to reside at Thonon, in the very stronghold of heresy. He lodged with a pious widow and, as there was in the city no Catholic chapel, the holy Apostle commenced

his labors, each day, by going to offer the Holy Sacrifice in the church of Marin, some distance from the city. In order to reach it, he had to cross a tottering bridge, which the melting snow soon carried off. It was replaced by the trunk of a tree, which the ice and snow rendered so slippery, that, in order to pass over this primitive bridge, Francis had to drag himself along on his hands and knees.

The example of so many virtues already produced abundant fruits. Souls flocked to him, sinners were converted, and every day some Protestants returned to God. The poor and lowly gave the example, but soon the two famous conversions, of Peter Poncet, a renowned lawyer, and the Baron d'Avully, the noble of highest rank in the Chablais, finally determined many of the weak and wavering of the better classes, to abandon heresy.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTINUATION OF WORK IN THE CHABLAIS.

THE two important conversions, mentioned at the close of the last chapter, were but the first-fruits of the gigantic work accomplished in a few short years, by the fervent Apostle of the Chablais. One of the

principal Calvinist ministers of Geneva, named La Faye, having had the imprudence to write to the Baron d'Avully that Francis had deceived him and that he pledged himself to convict the Saint of error, Francis, counting upon God's help, accepted the challenge. The minister not coming to Thonon, according to his promise, Francis went to him with the Baron d'Avully and a large number of Protestants. The conference took place publicly and Francis refuted so logically the errors of the Lutheran, that the latter insultingly put an end to the discussion. The effect was immense throughout the country, and the entire population was stirred by it, conversions were counted by hundreds, and whole villages returned to the unity of the Faith.

The duke of Savoy, charmed by the account of these wonders, sent for Francis to come to Turin, wishing to do all in his power to facilitate the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in his dominions. He ordered the restitution to the rectors, or "curés" of the Chablais, of the ecclesiastical property that had been seized by the Calvinists and restored the churches to Catholic worship.

On his return to Thonon, Francis had the conso-

lation of being able to celebrate midnight Mass, at Christmas, in spite of the threats of the Protestants, who wished to oppose it with violence and, from that day, the Holy Sacrifice was offered without interruption in that fortunate city, where heresy had triumphed for more than sixty years.

Meanwhile, God continued to bless the zeal and the virtues of His servant and the most striking conversions, such as that of Peter Fournier, syndic of Thonon, rewarded the exertions of the Apostle. The Holy See next intimated the desire that Francis should go to Geneva to confer with Theodore de Beza, Calvin's successor and chief of heresy, and he did not hesitate to act in accordance with it. After several perilous journeys, in which he endangered his life on the Lake of Geneva, the Apostle of the Chablais at last reached, on April eighth, 1597, the home of the distinguished Protestant. The minister was then seventy-seven years of age. His astonishment was great, when Francis presented himself and made known his purpose, but, influenced by the sanctity of his visitor, Theodore de Beza consented to have a discussion with him. In this first conference, the old man was forced to acknowledge

that salvation could be attained in the Roman Catholic Church. In order to justify the seditions, wars, massacres, and conflagrations, enkindled by the Calvinists, he fell back upon the exterior abuses which had glided into the Church, and further to defend his cause enlarged on the great principle of Protestantism, that faith, without works, suffices to be saved.

Francis went twice again to Geneva, but all his efforts were baffled by the obduracy of the heretic. He recognized the truth, but had not the courage to sacrifice his honors and his fortune, in order to embrace it. It is said that he wished to flee from Geneva, but the Protestants kept such sure guard about him until the end that, enslaved to these sectaries, he died without daring to abjure heresy.

Yet the visits of Francis to Geneva were not lost for every one. Having learned that a Catholic was dying in the house of a Calvinist, the apostle at once went there and, having sent every one out of the sick man's room, he heard his confession and gave him the Holy Viaticum, which he had brought with him. He left the patient comforted and ready for death.

Another soul was also to benefit by these journeys. At the inn where Francis stayed there lived, in the humble capacity of servant, a poor country girl, named Jacqueline Coste, whom God destined to become one day one of the first daughters of Saint Francis, in the future Order of the Visitation. Every Sunday Jacqueline went to Mass, at a village on the outskirts of the city, because in Geneva itself the practice of Catholic worship was severely proscribed. Here, as in all places where the Reform ruled, the first article of the code of religious liberty inaugurated by Protestantism, was to make the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice a crime punishable with death.

As soon as Francis had retired to his room, Jacqueline who recognized him as a Catholic priest, presented herself; he received her with kindness, heard her confession, and during the night gave her Holy Communion. As she asked him ingenuously: "What will you do, Father? You have no server to assist you;" he answered with a sweet smile: "My daughter, do not be troubled; our angels who are here present will take the place of servers. It is their function to pray around the Blessed Sacra-

ment." He left this poor, pious girl quite happy and strengthened and he himself carried away from this interview the foreknowledge that, later, he would find in her a helper in the accomplishment of the Will of God.

On returning to Thonon, Francis obtained from his Bishop three zealous priests to labor with him in evangelizing the Chablais. They immediately went to work and reaped abundant fruits in the harvest, which had been planted and prepared by Francis. One of their first thoughts was to celebrate with all possible solemnity the ceremony of the Forty Hours, in the town of Annemasse, three miles from Geneva. On the day fixed, Francis went thither preceded by the faithful Rolland, who carried the Cross, and followed by a crowd of Catholics, whose number increased at every village through which they passed. The processions were continued for three days, and ended only with the solemnity itself.

The erection of the Cross, which terminated the ceremonies, was still more touching. At the moment when the sacred Sign of salvation, borne by the Penitents of Annecy, was raised in the air and fastened in the ground opposite heretical Geneva, a

thrill passed through the throng, which did not number fewer than thirty thousand Catholics. The Protestants, scattered among the crowd, said to one another, with tears: "God is here; we have never seen anything like it." Several were converted; many were staggered in their belief, and a number of the Protestant ministers of Thonon and its vicinity, giving up their struggle against the general enthusiasm and the Catholic missionaries, left the country.

Shortly after, Francis having gone to Annecy to settle various matters, found the whole country in consternation. A fatal and contagious disease had broken out alarmingly, and daily made new victims. Instead of taking the rest he so much needed, the holy priest struggled with all his might against the scourge. Night and day, he visited the sick, cared for them with his own hands, comforted them, and prepared them for death. His health, already impaired by the unheard of fatigues of his apostolate, could not withstand the strain, and on the fourth of January, 1598, he was stricken by a malady, which, in a few hours, led him to the gates of death. Monseigneur de Granier, afflicted at the threatened loss of Francis, whom he considered as his right

arm, united with the whole city in offering prayers to God for the cure of the sick priest. Heaven allowed itself to be moved to piety and the patient suddenly recovered health.

Francis profited by it to return at once to Thonon, where the grace of God was working wonders, Father Humæus of the Society of Jesus, unaided, having in six months converted ten thousand heretics. The most notable conversion was that of a gentleman named Bouvier, whom a strange incident had brought into communication with our Saint. One day, when he was hunting in the woods of the Chablais, his dogs returned to him ; advancing to the edge of the wood, he saw Francis speaking to a throng of peasants. The discourse of this unknown man, his faith and zeal deeply affected Mr. Bouvier; having asked the name of the saint, he went to confer with him and made his public abjuration in the hands of Francis.

It was to this true Apostle that reverted, in the sight of God and man, the merit and the honor of all these conversions. A striking miracle, worked through his intercession, put the seal to his reputation for sanctity. In one of the suburbs of Thonon

lived a Protestant lady who, up to that time, had in spite of everything remained firmly attached to Calvin. She gave birth to a child, whom she neglected to have baptized and who died shortly after its birth. The poor mother, distracted with grief, wished herself to carry her son to the cemetery and bury him. On her way, she suddenly saw Francis and running toward him, exclaimed : " Father, give me back my child, at least long enough to be baptized, and I will become a Catholic." Francis fell on his knees and prayed. Hardly was the prayer ended, when the child opened his eyes, moved his limbs, and returned to life. The mother, almost crazy with joy, immediately had him baptized by the Saint, who was surrounded by an immense crowd and shortly after, she and her whole family were converted.

The duke of Savoy had attached great importance to coming in person to the Chablais to organize the Catholic religion and punish its former persecutors. At the entreaties of Monseigneur de Granier and of Francis, who pleaded the cause of the guilty and especially of the members of the consistory, he gave up the idea of punishing them. So much clemency

completely won all hearts; thirty thousand souls returned to the Roman Church, the work of the Apostle was accomplished, God called him to other labors.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

FRANCIS BECOMES COADJUTOR, THEN BISHOP.

MEANWHILE, Monseigneur de Granier, exhausted by fatigues and weighed down by infirmities, resolved to take Francis as coadjutor, with right of succession to the See of Geneva. At the first words of the holy Bishop on this subject, Francis, in fear and dismay, declared himself incapable of fulfilling the charge and obstinately refused it. Monseigneur de Granier then deputed his chaplain to intimate to Francis the formal order to accept it, and thus he was compelled to yield. The joy of the entire diocese was immense, but it did not last long, as a malignant fever attacked the Saint and brought him to the verge of the grave. At the very hour when the city of Annecy awaited with consternation the news of his death, God, for the third time, suddenly restored him to health. Scarcely had he recovered,

when he set off for Rome, in order to regulate diverse affairs. The Holy Father, Clement the Eighth, manifested the greatest consideration for him and wished himself to preside at the examination then required of Bishops. Francis excited the admiration of this great Pope, of Baronius, Bellarmine, Cardinal Borromeo and other theologians, who questioned him, and, at the conclusion of the examination, Clement the Eighth, descending from his throne, embraced the holy Bishop elect and said in a loud voice: "*Drink, my son, water out of thy own cistern and the streams of thy own well; let thy fountains be conveyed abroad, and in the streets, divide thy waters.*"—(Prov. v. 15, 16.) He returned to Annecy with the title of Bishop of Nicopolis, but his humility made him postpone the ceremony of his episcopal consecration.

Some months later, Francis went out to meet Henry the Fourth, who had come to declare war against the duke of Savoy. The benevolence and the respect of the king were such, that the duke's envoy at once obtained peace and afterwards, in spite of the efforts of the Protestants, all that he requested for the maintenance of the Catholic religion in the Chablais.

Shortly after his return to Annecy, Francis was summoned to the castle of Sales, where M. de Boisy, his father, lay seriously ill. After having consoled and fortified him for the last journey, our Saint returned to preach the Lent, which he had already begun ; it was at the beginning of one of his sermons, that he was apprised of the death of the brave old warrior. At the end, he said these words: "Gentlemen, just as I came into this pulpit, I heard of the death of him, to whom I owe most on earth. My father, your friend, is dead. You were good enough to love him here, and I beseech you now to pray for the repose of his soul and not to take it amiss, if I absent myself for a few days, in order to render him the last duties." Then a torrent of tears rushed from his eyes and he left the pulpit, followed by a sympathetic murmur.

The course of sermons completed, the Saint, at the request of his Bishop, started for Paris, to plead with the king the cause of the freedom of Catholic worship in the country of Gex. Henry the Fourth, more and more impressed by the sanctity of the Apostle, granted him all that he asked, and when Francis refused an important bishopric and royal favors, the

monarch said to him: "Your modesty places you above me; I believe myself to be above those who intrigue for my favors, but I am beneath those who refuse them."

While Francis was returning to his dear diocese, Monseigneur Claude de Granier died, and our Saint was at last obliged to decide on the acceptance of the entire episcopal ministry, whose honors he had hitherto shunned. A miraculous event marked the ceremony of his consecration: as he was kneeling before the consecrating prelate, his countenance became illumined; he clearly saw the Holy Trinity, and each of the Three Divine Persons gave him a special blessing, while the Blessed Virgin, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, also visible to his eyes, took him under their protection.

The fervor and piety of Francis were greatly increased by his consecration and the new bishop, resolved to devote himself without reserve to the service of God, commenced by organizing everywhere the work of catechising, which he considered of the utmost importance. In order to preach by example, he himself gave catechism lessons to the children of his episcopal city, deeming it his

duty to teach them, with the principles of our holy Faith, the first virtues of childhood and youth. Children all loved him, says one of his biographers, and flocked about him for a smile or a blessing, and sometimes, when they had had both, would slip on ahead to catch him and have them over again. One day, when he was visiting a community, he left the parlor door open, "Monseigneur," said a Sister, "the draught must inconvenience you." He got up and went to shut the door, but returned to his seat, leaving it open. "There are so many little children peeping at me, through it," he explained, "that I have not the courage to shut it in their faces." Besides the catechism, the new bishop instituted synods or official meetings for his priests, which permitted him to know them better, and which prompted them to give themselves more actively to study.

In the year 1603, Francis, having been invited to preach the Lent at Dijon, consented, after taking the advice of the Pope and the duke of Savoy. Before going there, he wished to make a retreat at the castle of Sales, during which, under divine inspiration, he saw in spirit the Baroness Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal who, later, under his direction,

was to be the instrument of Providence, in leading numberless souls to sanctity. One of the objects of the holy Bishop's coming to Dijon was the settlement of various difficulties, concerning his diocese, with the young Archbishop Andrew Frémiot, Madame de Chantal's brother. Having succeeded in this, the Saint gave himself up to preaching, with his accustomed zeal. The people thronged about his pulpit, and among them Madame de Chantal, a widow. Afterwards, meeting Francis at her brother's table, she confided to him the direction of her life and contracted with him one of the tenderest and most angelic friendships ever known.

Madame de Chantal, then aged thirty-two, had been the model of wives, during her short married life of eight years with the brave and pious Baron de Chantal. The Baron, being accidentally killed at the hunt, by one of his friends, the young widow had consecrated her life to the poor and to her children.

Desirous to fit this elect soul for the designs of God, which, without knowing, he already divined, Francis by his letters raised Madame de Chantal to the most enlightened piety. Yet while he endeavored in recollection and prayer to prepare the way

for the Order, with which God willed, by his means, to adorn His Church on earth and His Church in Heaven, he took care not to neglect any of the works of his diocese. Loved by all, he was prodigal of himself to all. The poor found in him the surest and most faithful support, sinners the most wonderful clemency. All his efforts tended to gain to God the souls confided to his fatherly care. The gift of prophecy often rendered luminous his spiritual direction, and his penetration of the secrets of hearts gradually drew his penitents to more ardent love of God.

To his many arduous labors, were added pastoral visitations, which, until his death, he accomplished with perfect exactitude and unbounded charity. Francis cured publicly more than eighty persons, possessed by the devil, and his kindness towards the sick, whom he took pleasure in visiting and often in caring for in person, was at times carried so far as to obtain of God great miracles of healing.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

FRANCIS PREACHES THE LENT AT CHAMBERY. DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, M. DE DEAGE AND HENRY THE FOURTH.

MANY other wonders followed in the footsteps of this true servant of God. During the Lent of 1606, which Francis preached at Chambéry, in presence of the Senate and an immense congregation, one day, when his theme was the love of God, his words became so ardent and impetuous, his face so radiant, that one would have said that he saw unveiled the divine Majesty. At the same moment, a Crucifix hanging on the wall opposite the pulpit, darted upon him rays of glory. The people listened with respect to the words of him whose sanctity was proclaimed by such a prodigy. Before leaving Chambéry, Francis conferred Holy Orders on a hundred ecclesiastics, whom he himself had prepared with the most fatherly interest.

On returning to Annecy, the Bishop found the city in terror and consternation, the heretics of Geneva were coming to attack it. Francis was urged to flee, but he refused, wishing to share the peril that threatened his flock, whose courage his presence alone sufficed to restore. One Sunday when Vespers were about to begin, the enemy appeared, close to the walls of the city. Francis, untroubled, went to Vespers, and his prayers, more powerful than an army, sufficed to avert the danger; the Protestants, changing their minds at the last moment, retraced their steps.

His courage, drawn from divine sources, sometimes seemed to amount to rashness. Having received from Henry the Fourth the order to go to Gex, to confer with the Lieutenant-General on the measures concerning the exercise of worship, he immediately set out. But the Rhone having, in consequence of a freshet, become impassable, it was necessary to cross the bridge at Geneva. Francis did not hesitate. "Let us go," he said, "under the protection of God." On arriving at the gate of Geneva, his followers were asked what lord they accompanied. "The Bishop of the Diocese," was the

answer. The official, not knowing what the word *diocese* meant, allowed him to pass. Francis and his suite thus traversed the city, in which, if he had been captured, certain death awaited him. Great were the spite and rage of the Calvinists, when informed of this heroic act; they declared that if Francis came again, they would have his head cut off upon the *Place du Molard*, where upon one occasion he had in a conference convicted their ministers of lying and heresy.

In the midst of all these apostolic labors, Francis did not forget literature and the sciences and established at Annecy an Academy of Philosophy, Theology and Literature, under the title of the Florimontane Academy. The reputation of this home of learning, composed of forty members, as was also the French Academy, to which it served as model in many points, soon spread throughout Savoy, and we may say of Saint Francis of Sales that he was as much for his style, as for the formation of this academy, one of the Fathers of French literature.

His acquaintance with beautiful language and the infinite charm of expression, observable in the letters of the Saint, are especially remarkable in the two

admirable books which he has left us and which are handed down through the centuries as undying monuments of his virtue and learning : The *Treatise of the Love of God*, composed in the latter years of his life, and the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, the first to come forth from his busy pen. The latter is, next to the *Imitation*, the most beautiful book that ever issued from the hand of man. It was at the request of his best friends and the unceasing entreaties of Henry the Fourth, who had become, whatever may be said to the contrary, a Christian in conviction and practice, that this book was written. The sensation it caused was immense and the good it did, still greater. Popes, Cardinals, Bishops and Christian Princes, made it their inseparable companion, from which, with the humblest of the faithful, they derived the knowledge to serve God and the courage to love Him. The celebrity acquired by this book afflicted the Saint, who sought only to humble himself. "I would wish you to know me well," he wrote to Madame de Chantal ; "you would esteem me but little. You would say : 'There is a trunk, upon which God wishes me to lean and yet this trunk is good for nothing.'" Another time he

said: "The waters of grace flow only into humble souls and leave high and dry the tops of the mountains, that is to say, proud and haughty souls." Such were the admirable humility and simplicity of this wholly divine man, in whom the genius equalled the holiness.

If Francis sought God and loved him in all things, he especially blessed His paternal Hand in the trials sent him. In the year 1610, repeated and terrible blows were dealt out to the holy Bishop, without his losing his serenity in the midst of suffering the most painful to his loving heart. Madame de Boisy, his mother, was approaching the term of her life. Prompted by a secret presentiment, she had come to Annecy, to make under the direction of her son, a retreat of a month in preparation for death. Scarcely had she returned to her castle of Sales, when she was stricken with apoplexy. Francis went to her at once, and the saintly mother, recognizing her son, took his hand, which she kissed reverently, saying: "I owe you this token of respect, as my father," then she kissed him on the forehead, saying: "I owe you this mark of tenderness, as my son." In his own inimitable way, Francis wrote to Saint Chantal the

story of the end: "She lay in the same state two days and a half; after that, nothing seemed to rouse her, and on the first of March, she gave up her soul to our Lord gently, peaceably and with a composure and greater beauty than she had, perhaps, ever had; in death itself, I have seen few remain so beautiful. And as for the rest, I must tell you I had the courage to give her the last blessing and close her eyes and lips and give her the kiss of peace, at the moment she passed away. After which, my heart was very full, and I wept over that good Mother more than I have wept since I went into the Church."

Francis was still weeping for his mother, when he lost Mr. Déage, his tutor and friend, who expired in his arms. The master had never ceased to reprove the pupil, when occasions presented themselves, and the ever humble pupil had never ceased to hearken to the advice of the master.

Finally, the tragic death of Henry the Fourth filled up the measure, which made this year of 1610 the most sorrowful in the life of Francis. His affection, admiration and gratitude for this great monarch had long assured to the King of France a large place in the heart of the holy Bishop.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION (1610)

GOD, who loves His Saints, sends them both crosses and consolations and both are pledges of His love. It was that very year 1610, so filled with afflictions, that gave rise to the Order of the Religious of the Visitation. Francis who, since his meeting with Madame de Chantal at Dijon, had been for this purpose forming with care the soul of the Saint, bade her come to him about Pentecost, and said to her: "God destines you to establish an Order in which will preside the charity and meekness of Jesus Christ, into which shall be admitted the weak and the infirm and which shall be employed in caring for the sick and in visiting the poor." "Father," answered Saint Chantal, "I am ready to obey." As we see, Saint Francis thought of making the aim of his new Order, one of charity, but God, who reserved this glory for

Saint Vincent de Paul, ordained otherwise, and the Order of the Visitation was to correspond to other needs.

The preceding year, Madame de Chantal had confided to her father, President Frémiot, her desire to consecrate herself to God. The Baron of Thorens, brother of Francis, being about to marry the eldest daughter of the holy widow, furnished the occasion of seeing Francis, and the President wished to confer with him. After the Bishop of Geneva had affirmed and clearly shown that such was the will of God, Madame de Chantal's father and brother gave their consent, and having made the family arrangements for the children, necessitated by the new position of the mother, the departure of the latter was fixed for the end of November. A fresh delay, then demanded by President Frémiot, caused her departure to be deferred until the Easter feasts of the following year, 1610.

God's hour always strikes; men may retard it, but, even so, it comes at the moment marked by Providence. The history of human sorrow records few more touching scenes than that of this parting. The whole family had assembled at the house of Presi-

dent Frémiot, when the father, overcome by his feelings, abruptly left the room, to give free vent to his grief. The Baroness herself, her face bathed in tears, was a prey to the strongest emotion. Her son Celse Bénigne, who loved her with an ardent and passionate affection, threw himself at her feet and, calling her by the sweetest names, besought her with sobs to renounce her project. Almost overcome by her sorrow, but strong in her faith in Him who demanded the sacrifice, the mother pressed her child in her arms, explaining to him the reason of her departure, but the youth would not be appeased.

As if exhausted of strength, Madame de Chantal was leaving the room, Celse Bénigne threw himself on the ground, across the doorway: "As I cannot persuade you," he exclaimed, "at least it shall be said that you trod your child under foot!" At this cry, in presence of this action, the holy woman stopped for a moment, raised to Heaven her eyes streaming with tears and giving a sigh, which echoed in the very depths of the hearts of all present, she passed over the body of her son, then stood motionless at the door, fainting with sorrow and, as it were, overcome by her own victory.

The sacrifice was consummated! Madame de Chantal, accompanied by her daughters and other relatives, arrived at Annecy, where Francis was waiting to receive her. He came out to meet her, with several persons of high rank. On the sixth of June, 1610, Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal and her two companions, Mademoiselle de Bréchard and Mademoiselle Favre, having stripped themselves of all their worldly possessions, entered the little house, that had been made ready for them. The next morning, the saintly Bishop gave them Holy Communion and addressed to them words, which seemed to have fallen from Heaven, then, having blessed them, he left them with their God. The three favored souls began their noviciate at once and, during the first year, ten new Sisters came to increase the number of the novices.

On the sixth of June, 1611, Madame de Chantal and her first companions pronounced their Vows, then immediately occupied themselves with the service of the poor and the sick, as Francis first intended. Five weeks later, Mother de Chantal was cruelly afflicted by the death of her father, President Frémiot. By the order of Francis, she had to go

and put in order the affairs of her children, which she did with great wisdom, then she returned to her Sisters, to resume the service of the poor.

Soon, exhausted with fatigue, she fell ill, but the Bishop cured her immediately by applying to her the relics of Saint Blaise. A more serious relapse having supervened, the holy Bishop, seeing the danger, again appealed to the mercy of God and put into a potion given the patient, a little dust of the relics of Saint Charles Borromeo and made a vow that, if Mother de Chantal recovered, he would go in pilgrimage to the tomb of the Saint at Milan. The Mother was at once restored to perfect health.

The "good odor" of the Visitation was diffused so far abroad that, at the request of the Cardinal de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, Francis consented to found its second house in that city. This was the signal for an important transformation. Acting on the advice and in compliance with the formal demand of the Cardinal, Francis modified the Constitutions of the Congregation, and made it henceforth a cloistered and contemplative Order, with solemn Vows, entirely animated by a spirit of meek-

ness, love and sweetness, having few bodily austerities, but demanding absolute mortification of heart and will. Ornsby, one of our Saint's historians, says: "It came upon the world like an original and fertile discovery that the mortification of the will may be turned to as great and even more extensive account, than the mortification of the body. Very few constitutions indeed could sustain the tremendous discipline of the Cistercian fast; and, in our own times, we believe it has been ascertained that, out of a community, consisting of twenty or thirty, there are scarce six who are not obliged to avail themselves of dispensations. No dispensation is required in a system, which is based on the mortification of the will. In such a system the most delicate can be as perfect as the strongest; corporal mortifications must, moreover, in every case, arrive at a speedy limit, whilst the occasions of every moment of conscious existence might, if required, be turned into mortifications of the will." The "*Spiritual Entertainments*" of the Saint with his daughters have been preserved; therein, we read on every page the double aim of the holy Founder, love of God and detachment from self.

It was on the ninth of October, in the year 1618, in virtue of a bull from Pope Paul the Fifth, that the institute was erected into a regular monastic order, with enclosure and under solemn Vows.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

VARIOUS INCIDENTS OF THE SAINT'S LATER YEARS.

NOT only by his words, but still more by his example, did Francis inculcate that detachment from self, with which he strove to inspire his daughters. Sermons, confessions, visits to the poor, the conversion of heretics, continual journeys in his diocese and the formation of priests, were duties faithfully fulfilled and, as Francis himself said, "without ever being hurried."

One of his first cares was to accomplish his vow, by going to Milan to pray at the tomb of Saint Charles Borromeo, thence he went to Turin to venerate the Holy Winding Sheet and then returned to Annecy. As Francis was celebrating Pontifical Mass on the feast of Pentecost, a dove flew from the vault of the Church and rested on his head ; the

same prodigy was renewed on the feast of the Nativity ; and the people, struck by the virtue of the prelate, saw in these extraordinary incidents proofs of the holiness that Francis in vain endeavored to conceal from all eyes.

Hardly a day passed that the holy Bishop did not convert some heretic, or some great sinner. His glance, his demeanor, his words, touched the most hardened hearts. He not only saved souls, but cured bodies and expelled demons, whom his blessing put to flight. One day, when several sick persons had been brought to him, at the bishop's house, faithful Rolland asked him to cure them. The Saint answered with a smile : "I am delighted to have George Rolland teach me to work miracles," then he prayed over them and healed them, as he blessed them.

However, this power over demons and sinful souls, sometimes met with an invincible obstacle in the bad dispositions of these souls. A lawyer of Geneva had sworn implacable hatred to the Saint and, on every occasion, poured forth invectives and calumnies against him. Meeting this man, one day, Francis approached him and said : "You wish me evil and

yet, if you tore out one of my eyes, I would not fail to look at you affectionately with the other." Such meekness did not disarm this enemy, who went so far as to fire pistol shots, at night, through the windows of the Bishop's house and to wound the Vicar General with the thrust of a sword. Arrested and condemned to death the lawyer was about to be executed, when Francis by entreaties obtained his pardon. This he carried to the criminal in his prison-cell, where, kneeling down, he asked forgiveness for the offence he had unknowingly committed against him. This prodigy of charity did not touch the wretch who, shortly after, died miserable and impenitent.

The admirable charity which the holy Bishop evinced toward his enemies, extended to all those who surrounded him; his servants, the poor, the lowly, and especially sinners, had a large share in that inexhaustible goodness, so full of tenderness and graciousness. Once, when a young man was brought to him to be reprimanded, Francis did it with so much gentleness, that some persons blamed him for it: "What will you?" he replied "I did what I could to arm myself with an anger that sins

not; I took my heart in both hands and I had not the courage to throw it at his head. Then, too, I feared to spill in a quarter of an hour the spirit of meekness, which for twenty-two years, I have been trying to collect as dew, in the vase of my heart."

The Saint's kindness to the poor seemed to increase from year to year, with his gentle dignity and many eminent virtues. All the money that he possessed, his personal resources, even the candlesticks belonging to his chapel, all were given to the needy, in spite of the protestations of his servants. One day, when it was intensely cold, Francis saw enter his room a man so poorly clothed, that he was shivering. Touched with compassion, the Bishop, finding nothing in his wardrobe, took off the garments that he wore under his soutane and gave them to this poor man, taking good care not to tell his attendants, so that, until evening, Francis remained exposed to the cold, from which he had preserved his visitor.

Knowing that the priest lives by the altar, the Bishop of Geneva received with simplicity the little presents that the villagers offered him for the services of his ministry, chestnuts, fruits, eggs, cheese.

Francis gave to the poor whatever money he received, but wished that all these things should be served at his table, joyously repeating these words of Scripture: "You are happy to eat the fruit of your toil." He did more than give his money, he gave himself, being prodigal of his time, health, heart, and sparing nothing, when there was question of the service of God and souls. His brother John Francis reproached him, on one occasion, with having granted too long an audience to a poor servant, who came to see him. "Do you not know," the gentle Saint said to his brother, "that bishops are like those large public drinking-fountains, from which every one has a right to draw and whither, not men only, but even beasts, come to quench their thirst." In fine, to resume the life of our Saint, we will borrow the words of Saint Vincent of Paul, which so well expressed the unanimous opinion of the people: "What then art Thou, O my God? since the Bishop of Geneva, who is but a man, is so good!"

It was at Paris, to which Francis had gone to treat of the marriage of the Prince of Piedmont with the Princess Christine of France, that Saint Vincent of Paul saw and learned to esteem the holy

Bishop. It was on this occasion that Francis intrusted to Saint Vincent the direction of the community of the Visitation, that he had just established at Paris. Francis was accustomed to say that the saintly Founder of the Fathers of the Mission and the Sisters of Charity, was "the worthiest priest he had ever known," while M. Vincent, as he was called, asserted that the meekness, modesty, majesty, of Francis strongly retraced the image of the Son of God, conversing among men, and that he knew no one so capable of winning hearts for God.

CHAPTER NINTH.

DEATH OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great efforts made to retain him in France, Francis, as soon as the marriage was concluded, hastened to return to his dear diocese, which he was soon again to leave for new journeys to Pignerol and Turin, and, finally, for a last one to Lyons, where he was to die. By divine inspiration, he knew that death awaited him at the end of his voyage and, after having regulated all

the affairs of his diocese with John Francis of Sales, his coadjutor and brother, he set off, surrounded by all the élite of the city, who wept over the departure of him, whom they were never again to meet in this world. From Avignon, to which he went directly, he traveled on to Lyons, with the king, Louis the Thirteenth, and the Duke of Savoy. Here, in spite of the many offers of hospitality made him by the great and noble, Francis took up his abode at the Convent of the Visitation,in a poor room of the gardener's house.

Saint Chantal, who was then visiting the Monasteries of her Order, reached Lyons almost at the same time. For three years she had not seen the saintly friend and director of her soul, but the four hours during which she conversed with him were given not to her spiritual concerns, but to the affairs of the Institute they loved so well. She received, as those of God Himself, the instructions, which were to be the last of the holy Bishop.

Mother de Chantal then resumed the course of her visits and the Saint, on his side, was about to leave the city of Lyons, which he had edified by his gentle virtues and extraordinary sanctity. Among

other predictions made at this time, Francis announced to Madame Olier that her son would, one day, be one of the glories of the Church of France. It was on the twenty-seventh of December, 1622, about two o'clock in the afternoon, that the holy Bishop was suddenly stricken with apoplexy. Every means that medical science could suggest was employed to prolong his valuable life, but Francis, knowing that the hour of recompense had struck, prepared for death with the greatest calmness received Extreme Unction, and awaited in unbroken peace, the summons to his heavenly Home.

Until the end, the gentle Saint did not cease to console those who surrounded him, blessing them and exhorting them to submit to the divine Will. On the twenty-eighth of December, as night approached, the last word he was heard to utter was the Name of "Jesus." Silence followed and then, while those about him invoked the Holy Innocents, he died.

"The simplicity of this gentle death is nothing more than the universal law of cause and effect. If a stormy, erratic life closes in a violent reaction against death, or an agonized effort to make up the task of a life-time, in the little space of the eleventh hour, it is

again effect produced by cause. But in a life, like the one we have just studied, the death, for which the life prepared, is the more beautiful, because the life and death are alike ; the latter only the continuation, the complement of the former, and the last temporal moments are in fact only a perfect double chord, striking the harmony of a holy past and the key-note of an eternal future."

From the moment of his death, there commenced a public devotion to Francis of Sales, which God Himself favored by innumerable miracles. The holy body was taken to Annecy, where it still lies. Ten years later, when the coffin was opened in the presence of Saint Chantal and the commissaries of the Pope, the body was found as fresh and entire as at the instant, when the soul quitted it for Heaven. Saint Chantal, taking the Saint's hand, laid it upon her head and, tradition says, the hand becoming animated, pressed her head, as with a fatherly caress.

The earnest and repeated petitions of the Bishops hastened the canonization, which took place on the nineteenth of August, 1665, and, since then, Christian youth venerate as the patron of students the illustrious Bishop, who carried to such a high de-

gree the knowledge that makes men and the science that makes saints.

The influence of the virtues and works of Saint Francis of Sales, proclaimed Doctor of the Church in 1877, still beams forth, as on the day of the death of this illustrious Confessor. Our young readers may wonder why he was declared Doctor of Piety, when already canonized a Saint? and what is required that a Saint may receive the added lustre of the Doctorate? . . . Three conditions are required for a Saint to be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church: profound learning, supereminent sanctity, and a Decree of the Sovereign Pontiff, or a General Council. Saint Francis of Sales was, by his profound learning, the light of heretics, to bring them back to the unity of the faith; by his supereminent sanctity, the light of Christians, to show them the paths of perfection; and the light of Pastors, to guide them in their noble mission.

The spirit of Saint Francis of Sales lives after him "in those admirable Daughters of the Order of the Visitation, whose Convents rise from earth to Heaven, as so many living columns of prayer and penance, to ward off the divine anger, ready to burst

upon guilty man, and animates also many associations that claim him as their Founder or Patron.

The Association of Saint Francis of Sales, established by Monseigneur de Ségur, is one of those which best corresponds to the religious needs of modern society. To preserve, defend, support, and revive faith, wherever it is threatened, is the object of this work. In 1857, France saw springing up the little shoot, which has developed into the vigorous branch, extending over the entire country. More than one million five hundred thousand members participate in its action, and contribute, by their annual subscription, to found, support and develop free schools, works of Christian education, refuges for youths, parochial libraries, missions and popular retreats.

The good done by the Work of Saint Francis of Sales is immense, and is continually increasing. May it increase still more and, under the patronage of the Conqueror of Heresy, lead back to God and His Church those who despise them, and attract to the truth those still greater numbers who know it not!

LIFE OF SAINT JANE FRANCES FRÉMIOT DE CHANTAL.

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CHAPTER FIRST.

GIRLHOOD AND MARRIAGE. 1572–1595.

In a rambling old house on one of the principal streets of Dijon, a Burgundian town, on January twenty-third, 1572, there was born to Bénigne Frémiot, the President of the Parliament, and his wife, Margaret de Berbisy, a second daughter, whom her father insisted on having carried at once to the parish church to be baptized. As it was the feast of Saint John the Almoner, the infant received the name of Jane. When the child was only a year and a half old, her young mother, in giving her a little brother, was suddenly taken away, and thus her childhood was deprived of the perpetual influence of a mother's gentle influence and tender caresses. The little

girl's character was strong, firm, and full of vigor, qualities developed by her mother's loss and her close companionship with her father. She was well taught and made especial progress in Catechism, every article and point of faith being of intense interest to her, from her earliest years.

The old chronicles give us the following somewhat amusing scene: "One day a Calvinist happened to be disputing with President Frémiot upon the doctrine of the Real Presence; after listening for some time, with great attention, to the argument, Jane, not quite five years old, went up to the gentleman, with her face all crimson and said: 'But, my lord, we must believe that Jesus Christ is in the Blessed Sacrament, because He Himself said it. If you do not believe it, you make Him a liar.' The gentleman looked down at his small adversary in great surprise, and after trying in vain in various ways to puzzle her, he turned the subject in the way approved by custom with children, by giving her a large packet of sugar plums. Jane took them gravely into her pinafore and walking to the fireplace, threw them in, saying: 'Look, my lord, that is how heretics will be burned in the fire of hell, because they do not be-

lieve what our Lord says.' Another day, when the same gentleman was discussing some other doctrine with her father, Jane said to him: 'My lord, if you were to give the lie to the king, Papa would have you hung. And now look'—and she pointed to a large picture of Saints Peter and Paul—'you give the lie to our Lord so often, that those two presidents will have you hung!"

President Frémiot left nothing undone to develop the intelligent and brilliant mind of his little daughter and make her an accomplished young lady, giving her the best education that the times afforded. His admirable example also awakened her compassion for the poor and the suffering, and she never could see a beggar in rags, without shedding tears.

After her First Communion and Confirmation, when Jane took the name of Frances, she felt an ardent longing to consecrate herself to God's service, sometimes by devoting herself to the care of the poor and the sick, and again, by dying for the faith. At this time, the death of her grandfather, John Frémiot, known as the "father of the poor," gave her a deep appreciation of a life of self-sacrifice. The following details are given us by the historians

of Saint Chantal: "One day the venerable old man called his children and grandchildren round him, like the Hebrew patriarchs of old, and told them that his span of life was complete and that he was about to die. He then caused himself to be set on his mule and with the same patriarchal simplicity went to his various relations and bade them farewell, saying that he was about to depart on his last journey. The next day, he sent for a priest to say Mass in a little chapel, the altar of which he could see from his bed; made his confession, received Communion and Extreme Unction; and then begged that the Mass might begin, as, before the priest took the last ablution, he should be drinking the new wine with our Lord in His eternal kingdom. And so it came to pass; for, just as the priest was elevating the chalice, the holy old man lifted up his eyes with a look of earnest love and saying: 'When wilt thou comfort me, O my God?'—he departed, as he had foretold." This death, so beautiful in the eyes of faith, made a deep and lasting impression on the mature mind of Jane, then fifteen years old.

Soon afterwards, in 1587, her elder sister Margaret married the Lord de Neufchèzes des Francs in Poitou,

and Jane accompanied her to her new home. Burgundy was at this time a sort of focus of agitation and impending civil war. The parliament joined the insurgent party, with the single exception of the high-souled President, who retired into the country; his house was pillaged, his friends insulted, and his young son Andrew carried off to prison. The President, undisturbed, managed to seize Flavigny, a mountain fortress, to which he removed the parliament. Thither the leaguers sent his brother Claude to say to him that, if he did not dissolve the royalist parliament, they would kill his son and send the boy's head to him in a sack; his noble answer was, —"Better would it be for the child to die innocent, than for the father to live in dishonor." All party quarrels were broken up by the assassination of the king in 1589, but President Frémiot was so afflicted at the news of the crown having passed to a Huguenot sovereign, that, in one night, half of his hair became snow-white. As soon as Henry the Fourth had declared himself a Catholic, the President returned to the seclusion of his home.

Meanwhile, Jane was in Poitou, where her deep-rooted faith, zeal for the spread of Catholic truth, and

horror of erroneous teaching were strengthened by the sad sights that met her view,—broken church spires, ruined doorways, fragments of shrines and reliquaries strewing the roads, defaced village crosses, mutilated statues, and the ashes of burned chapels. The pain that these sights gave her was never forgotten, and in her old age, tears would again fill Saint Chantal's eyes, at the remembrance of the desecrated churches and shrines of Poitou.

Jane Frémiot was now sixteen years old, womanly in appearance and manner, and though she met the voice and eye of admiration and flattery for the first time and was, in some sort, the spoiled child of the circle in which her sister lived, she does not seem to have suffered from surrounding influences. Her special devotion to our Blessed Mother was her safeguard against temptation. "The portrait taken of her at that age seems to make a kind of lasting protest against the excessive luxury of dress, usual at the time, when pearls, chains, rows of gold beads, strings of buttons, studs, necklets and armlets, with lace and embroidery, almost covered the dress of the poor ladies who had to support the load. In this portrait, Jane wears a modest, square-cut dress of

some dark material, with a chemisette made to the throat, and under-sleeves, ruffled at the wrists. Her head is covered with a velvet coif and every part of the dress is absolutely without ornament."

While with her sister, Jane refused two very brilliant offers of marriage, showing a dignity, firmness, and maturity of judgment, which so young a girl could only have possessed through the influence of solid principles of religion. Another marriage was being arranged by her brother-in-law, the Baron des Francs, in 1591, when Jane received from her father a summons to return home, which she did at once, keenly as she felt leaving her sister Margaret. from whom she had never been separated. She was met, on her arrival at Dijon, by her future husband, Christopher de Chantal, with whom President Frémiot had become acquainted during the last war in support of Henry the Fourth, in which the young Baron was marked as a man of courage and unshaken loyalty. Civil war was now raging, and as President Frémiot had a price set on his head by the insurgents, he had left Dijon, and the marriage contract was drawn up at a village called Epoisses, and signed at Baron de Chantal's strong castle of Bourbilly, where

the marriage was also celebrated, in presence of the fathers of the bride and groom, and Jane's brother-in-law, Baron des Francs. It may interest our young readers to learn that, by the contract, "Jane was to have two hundred crowns a year to spend, with Bourbilly as her dower-house. She was also to receive from her husband jewels to the amount of six hundred crowns, with a carriage and four horses." Besides this, President Frémiot gave his daughter fifty thousand livres, about ten thousand dollars of our money, a considerable sum in those days.

Bourbilly, the dower-house, was a "beautiful picture-like home. The castle was fortified by a strong curtain wall and four flanking towers, defended by a broad moat with a drawbridge, to which led an avenue of splendid old trees. The little river Serain fertilized the breadth of lovely meadows and turned several corn mills on its way. Beyond the green meadows, sloped vineyards and, in the distance, forest was seen stretching for miles, and filling with its purple outline all the space to the horizon."

Madame de Chantal spent the first three months after her marriage in retirement, fervent prayer and reflection upon her future life, with continual obedi-

ence and devoted attention to her husband's wishes, then Henry the Fourth summoned the Baron to Paris. Before setting out, he explained to his young wife the whole state of his affairs, and placed the management of the property entirely in her hands, as his representative and second self, gently pointing out to her that this is the true wife's duty, in the fulfilment of which she could most thoroughly and faithfully serve God.

As soon as the Baron had gone, the young Baroness began her allotted task by re-establishing the daily celebration of holy Mass in the castle chapel, early enough for even the farm servants to assist at it. Then she spent part of each morning, at her knitting or spinning, in the midst of her maids, instructing them in the truths and practices of religion. The farm servants were treated just as kindly, and joyfully welcomed their mistress, as she rode over some part of the property every day, to see what was going on.

After dinner was over, Madame de Chantal went down to the poor who thronged the courtyard, and with sweet loving words and the brightest of smiles, served them with her own hand. Prisoners confined

for various offences, within the dungeons of the castle found in the Baroness a friend who pleaded their pardon with her husband, and sometimes took them out of the damp, airless hole to sleep in a comfortable bed.

The sorrows that clouded the life of Madame de Chantal, at this time, were the death of her sister Margaret des Francs and of the first children with whom God blessed her union, but later, He comforted her by the birth of four others, a boy and three girls, who lived to grow up. All that is known of their babyhood is that their mother immediately offered them to God and consecrated them to our Blessed Mother. The young Baroness was the centre and guiding spirit of this real Christian home, and people were so charmed by her conversation and manners, that they overlooked the fact of her bringing her little work-table to the reception rooms. Her husband liked society, so Madame de Chantal encouraged the visits of the neighboring barons and gentry, with whom the mornings were spent hunting and shooting. But while providing comfort and recreation for her visitors, Madame de Chantal would allow no parties or pleasure expeditions on Sundays,

that her servants might not be hurried through the services of the Church. On holydays, just one-half hour before the gentlemen were to start for hunting, or shooting, a priest was vested for Mass, so that no one need neglect the obligation of hearing it; and on Sundays, the hostess sweetly represented to her guests how much the example of hearing Mass at the parish church, would benefit the peasantry and, by her pleasant manners, persuaded even the most indifferent to accompany her. Thus did the daughter of the Frémiots illustrate the family motto: "Thus virtue bears above the stars."

CHAPTER SECOND.

LIFE AT BOURBILLY. BARON DE CHANTAL'S DEATH. EARLY WIDOWHOOD. 1595-1602.

In 1595, the gates of Dijon were opened to the triumphal entrance of the troops of Henry the Fourth and, ten days later, came the greater pageant of the king's personal entrance. On his departure, he took with him the Baron de Chantal. Suddenly the king's party fell upon the Spaniards, who un-

aware had crossed the Saône; the Baron was always at the king's side, and once made so brilliant and determined a charge, that the Spanish troops broke and gave way. That very night, Henry publicly acknowledged his obligations, settled a pension for life upon De Chantal, and insisted upon the Baron's following him to Paris, but the next thing we hear is that he obtained a leave of absence to go to Bourbilly.

It was at Bourbilly that, while silently pursuing her monotonous routine of duties and seeking God's will in prayer, Madame de Chantal discovered that she had sometimes put the gift before the Giver and that, in her natural joy at her husband's presence, she had shortened or disturbed her prayers and lost her taste for the duties of charity, and she resolved, with much sorrow and many tears, that, henceforth, God should be the first in her heart and in her life.

Not very long after, Baron de Chantal, feeling that he could not conscientiously perform some service Henry the Fourth required of him, lost favor with the king and, at the age of thirty-five, in the height of his reputation, he cheerfully made the heroic

sacrifice of his brilliant prospects for life and returned to Bourbilly. This was at the time of the frightful famine of 1601, when the dearth of all kinds of food was so terrible that thousands of the peasantry died of starvation. Madame de Chantal's charity was roused to action, and the young couple invented every means of relieving the misery around them. The peasant population from twenty miles around came to Bourbilly for food, and the Baron had a second gateway made in his courtyard, that those who came and went might be divided. But in spite of this precaution, some of the poor famishing creatures devoured their portion behind the castle walls and came back for a second. When the Baroness was informed of this, there sprang from her lips these touching words: "My God, I am a beggar every moment at the door of Thy mercy, and what should I say, if I were driven away by Thee, after a second or a third time? More than a thousand times hast Thou kindly borne with my importunity and shall I not bear with the importunity of Thy creatures?" A great part of the castle was fitted up as a hospital for the famine sick and there was built the great oven, called "the oven

of the poor," which was standing until a few years ago.

As time went on, the bountiful supplies of food in the castle stores lessened and disappeared until there remained in the granary only one barrel of flour and a small quantity of rye. When Madame de Chantal saw this, she, with her face radiant in unshrinking faith, turned to the astonished servants and bade them give bounteously to the crowds, besieging the castle gates. It is recorded that for full six months, the entire household and the neighboring poor were fed from this single barrel, and this miracle was renewed several times, while the famine lasted.

In the midst of these troubles, the Baron was taken seriously ill and his wife spent her days at his bedside, her nights in the chapel. While she was absorbed in ministering to him, his awakened soul soared to higher flights and he proposed to the wife that should either of them be taken by God, the survivor should be consecrated to His service; but Madame de Chantal would not hear of separation and turned from the subject. Her husband grew better, and together they prayed and read, played with their children, or strolled under the trees of the

avenue, interchanging inner thoughts, higher hopes and joys. Then came the visit of M. d'Anlézy of Chazelles, the Baron's cousin, who, proposing some more stirring exercise, the two gentlemen went out with their dogs and guns to beat the game. No one can now say what happened, but it is supposed that M. d'Anlézy's gun caught in the bough of a tree and went off without his knowledge, badly wounding Baron de Chantal in the upper part of the thigh. He fell, with a sharp, sudden cry, telling his friend and cousin that he forgave him with all his heart. When the message reached her, Madame de Chantal was in bed, after the birth of her last child, but she rose, had herself dressed and taken to the village, where her husband lay in the cottage nearest to the accident. Then, weak and ill, she lost her self-control and burst into hysterical sobs and cries, which her husband gently strove to soothe, trying to lead her to recognize God's Hand in the blow. He lingered in agonizing pain for nine days before he sank. His faith and love and unshrinking trust in God grew deeper and brighter every day, and the day before he died, he solemnly repeated his conviction that his death was accidental; he freely for-

gave him who had caused it and added a clause to his will, disinheriting any one of his children, who would indulge an idea of revenge.

The husband had departed, but the wife remained, refusing to take food or rest and spending many hours a day before the Blessed Sacrament, buried in a passion of grief and completely forgetful of the outer world. This condition lasted for four months, when the great instincts of motherhood at last awoke, and Madame de Chantal returned to some semblance of ordinary life. Almost her first action was to make a vow of perpetual Chastity, then she gave her wedding-gown and rich dresses to the Church, her husband's clothes to the poor, and pensioned off all the servants, not absolutely necessary. Her whole time was now devoted to prayer, reading, caring for the poor and teaching her children. Madame de Chantal now first felt the need of a good director, and began to pray very earnestly for one, when, one day, as she was riding alone about her property, she saw, at some little distance, and walking toward her, a person of serene and heavenly countenance, who looked liked a bishop, in cassock, rochet and baretta. At the same moment, the ears of her soul seemed to

hear the words: "This is the guide, well beloved of God and man, in whose hands you will place your conscience." She rode quickly to the spot, but found no one. At that very time, the Bishop of Geneva was rapt in ecstatic prayer in the old castle of Sales, when he saw a young widow and a new religious congregation, of which she was to be the mother and he, the guide and instructor.

Meanwhile, President Frémiot bade Madame de Chantal set everything in order at Bourbilly and make her home with him at Dijon, so she went to resume her old place in her father's house, where she spent the first year of her widowhood in much inward peace. It was at this period, that she put herself under the direction of a Friar Minim and bound herself to him by four vows. Though his appearance did not correspond to Madame de Chantal's vision of her future guide, this was not enough to make it imprudent to have recourse to him, and Saint Francis of Sales afterwards said that his direction was good for her soul, at the time.

Shortly after, the Baroness returned to Bourbilly where, one day, as she was weeping and praying in the castle chapel, she saw herself surrounded by a

great crowd of virgins and widows and heard a voice, saying: "This is the generation that shall be given to you and to My faithful servant, a chaste and chosen generation, and I will that it should be holy." She knew not what it meant, yet she was comforted.

Not long afterwards, Madame de Chantal again left Bourbilly, to take up her residence with her father-in-law, the old Baron de Chantal, at Monthelon, and devote herself to him in his declining years. Unless she consented to this, he declared that he would marry again and disinherit her children. The good mother felt that Monthelon was indeed not a fit place in which to bring up these young souls, because the Baron led an irregular life and had allowed himself to be enslaved by an unworthy woman, his housekeeper, who preyed upon and wasted the Baron's income, but, after reflection, Madame de Chantal decided that it was her first duty to care for her father-in-law, and that if she strove to set right what was wrong in his house, God would preserve her children from harm. When she set out, she found her carriage surrounded by a crowd of lame, blind, crippled and deformed, who closed around it and prevented the horses from moving, crying out

that their mother was about to leave them, never to come back again. And so it was, though the whole neighborhood of Bourbilly is still fragrant with recollections, traditions, sayings, and reverence of "the Good Lady" and, in the Confiteor, the country people are accustomed to say after "the holy apostles Peter and Paul" "and to the Good Lady," meaning Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

CHAPTER THIRD.

LIFE AT MONTHELON. SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES. WORK AMONG THE SICK AND POOR. 1602–1606.

It was towards the end of 1602, that Madame de Chantal began her long apprenticeship of seven years—in subjection and self-command, and the absolute surrender of her earnest desire for active good works. The old Baron was frank, brave and generous, but subject to fits of temper, violence and caprice, which frequently made his household tremble for their lives. Madame de Chantal never gave a single order, nor was she allowed to be regarded as the mistress of her father-in-law's house, in which the housekeeper reigned supreme. The holy Baroness

showed the utmost forbearance towards this woman, herself washing and dressing her five children and being ever a respectful and dutiful daughter to the Baron. It was during these suffering years, that Madame de Chantal became affiliated to the Order of the Capuchins.

In the spring of 1604, she went to Dijon, at her father's invitation, to hear Saint Francis of Sales preach the Lent sermons. No sooner had she seen the noble and serene face of the Saint, than she recognized the sort of vision she had had of her future guide, and her soul was filled with joy. Francis, also, was struck by the calm face of the young widow and enquired of her brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, who she was. The Bishop was soon on intimate terms with President Frémiot and his family and almost immediately exercised an influence over Madame de Chantal, testing and gauging, as it were, the temper of her soul, yet her obedience to him was strictly limited to external acts. It was not until her director, to whom she was bound by a fourfold chain, was temporarily called away, that she went to confession and opened her mind to the holy Bishop. The peace she then enjoyed was soon

followed by great mental torture for having broken her vow, made to the Father Minim, and this anguish ended only, when, on the advice of Father de Villars, a Jesuit, she placed herself definitively under the direction of Saint Francis of Sales, at the pilgrimage of Saint-Claude, in the August of 1604. The Bishop gave her a new rule of life and method of prayer with definite points for the practice of virtue and the training of her children, softening her somewhat exacting disposition in regard to their conduct and faults.

They were four in number, Celse Bénigne, Marie Aimée, Françoise and Charlotte, whom their mother watched over with untiring solicitude, herself teaching them to read, to repeat and explain the Catechism, and thoroughly to understand their religion. She taught them to love and to visit the sick and the poor, carrying to them food and clothing. Not less attention did this excellent mother give to the culture of their souls and the development of their characters and the Bishop was constantly advising her: "Do this like the Angels,"—that is, that a mother's influence must always be used meekly, gently and sweetly.

Madame de Chantal had another meeting with Francis, at the castle of Sales, in the May of 1605, and in the common intercourse of home life, Francis noticed the faults, shortcomings, and tendencies of this vigorous character and counselled her accordingly, so that she returned to Monthelon with fresh energy for the cultivation of her soul. This was shown in practical and, what are called, small things and caused her servants to say: "Madame's old confessor had bidden her say her prayers three times a day and all were tired of it, but the new one made her pray all day long and no one was put about." At the word of Francis, Madame de Chantal even resolved that she would change her face and replace by cheerfulness the weary grief stamped upon it since her husband's death; she took up her singing again and, in every way, became more gentle and sweet-mannered. Small details of self-denial became part of her daily life, and gradually, she gave up every remnant of outward worldliness, sacrificing even her long silky brown hair.

More time than ever was given to visiting and relieving the poor in their own homes, performing for them the most repulsive personal acts, and enjoying

the monopoly, so to say, of burying the dead. Her relatives took great offence, accusing her of wasting her time and means, leaving her father-in-law to the care of servants, and exposing her children to infectious diseases. Madame de Chantal calmly and humbly explained her actions, thus allowing us to see how perfectly her conduct was ruled by a divine law, regarding the sick and the afflicted, as the unbroken race of Christ's members, carrying the Cross after Him.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

MADAME DE CHANTAL'S VOCATION TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. 1607–1610.

THERE came a time, probably about the year 1606, when the ordinary Christian life, perfect as she might make it, seemed to Madame de Chantal but a lame and halting progress, compared with the aspirations of her soul for a more intimate union with God, but to all her entreaties, pleas, and representations, Francis, at first, only replied; "Patience, we will speak of this by and by." Meanwhile, the Car-

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melites founded a house at Dijon, and Madame de Chantal sought the counsel of Mother Anne of Jesus; she even went so far as to ask her director's permission to enter this convent, but did not obtain it, while the nuns themselves dissuaded her. Mother Mary of the Trinity said: "No, Madame, you will never be one of Saint Teresa's daughters. God will give you so many of your own that, instead, you will be one of her companions."

After about a year, Francis again summoned Madame de Chantal to Annecy, where she arrived a few days before Whit-Sunday. On Monday, the Bishop calling her, said with great earnestness; "My daughter, I have quite decided what I will make of you."

Madame de Chantal knelt down and replied: "And I am resolved to obey you, my Lord and Father."

"That is well," he said. "You must enter the Poor Clares."

"I am quite ready, Father."

"Still, I think you are scarcely strong enough. You shall be a hospital Sister, at Beaune."

"As you please."

"No, that is not what I wish. You shall be a Carmelite."

"I am ready to obey."

"No," said Francis, "none of these vocations would suit you." Then he went on to unfold to her his idea of the Visitation, its plan and spirit, and Madame de Chantal knew that she now heard the genuine direction of God for her future life and work.

Shortly after this, wearied out with numerous and continual offers of marriage, Madame de Chantal one day heated a bodkin red-hot and branded the Name of Jesus indelibly upon her heart; with the blood that flowed from the wound, she wrote a renewal of her vows and the resolution to give herself wholly to God.

In 1607 or 1608, when Madame de Chantal was again visiting the castle of Sales, the project of a marriage between the Bishop's young brother, Bernard de Sales, and her little daughter Marie Aimée was formed. After some hesitation, President Frémiot, the child's grandfather, gave his consent, though she was only eleven years old and about to make her First Communion. Meanwhile, Jane de Sales, the Bishop's little sister, had been

intrusted to Madame de Chantal, to be brought up with her own children. In the fall of this same year, 1608, the bright young girl, stricken with fever, died after a severe illness of a few days. This loss, which Madame de Chantal made a vow to replace, by giving one of her own daughters to the family of Sales, hastened the plan of Marie Aimée's marriage, which loosened the bonds that tied her mother to Monthelon. It was only natural that she should wish to be near the child-wife at Annecy, in moments of need.

After the wedding ceremony, a family consultation was held upon Madame de Chantal's desire to enter religion, which, shortly before, she had made known to her venerable father. The matter was still unsettled, when little Charlotte de Chantal, the youngest child, died, and then, Madame de Boisy, the Bishop's revered mother, and it became manifest that Madame de Chantal would be obliged to remove to Annecy. She left Monthelon amid most affecting scenes, about the middle of March, 1610, and Dijon, where she had the fiercest of all fiery ordeals to encounter, on the nineteenth, Saint Joseph's day. All the relatives whom it was possible to assemble came to President Frémiot's house to bid her farewell.

Here it was that Celse Bénigne, her only son, wrought up to the highest pitch of desperate and rebellious suffering, passionately declared that, if she would persist in leaving them, she should pass over his body, and he threw himself at full length before the door, so that his mother was actually obliged to step over him to get to her carriage. Then came the parting from her venerable father, who, weeping, bitterly, raised his aged hands above her head and blessed her, as she knelt before him. Afterwards he roused himself that, as he said, he might "show more reverence for God's will," gave her a beautiful letter for Francis of Sales, and put her and her companions into the carriage waiting at the gate.

As the party approached Annecy, Francis, accompanied by the principal inhabitants of the town, came out to welcome the "good lady," who had given up so much for God's sake. Indeed, it seemed as if all Annecy had turned out of doors, on that beautiful Palm Sunday evening, and it was through a friendly and rejoicing crowd, that the tired travelers were conducted to the house of Mr. Favre, President of the Parliament of Savoy, where Madame de Chantal was to remain a few days.

Meanwhile, Francis purchased, on the very edge of the Lake of Annecy, a small house, with a green court on one side and, on the other, a pretty orchard, connected with the house by a covered bridge, thrown over the road. It was called the Little Gallery House and he said of it: "I have found a hive for my poor bees, or rather, a cage for my little doves." *Poor*, indeed, they were, for the holy Bishop having commanded Madame de Chantal to be satisfied to receive as alms an allowance made her by her brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, she had made over to her children all that she possessed, and there were but a few crowns in the house. On June sixth, the feast of Saint Claude and Trinity Sunday, Madame de Chantal and her two companions, Marie Favre and Charlotte de Bréchard went to Mass and Holy Communion, spending the rest of the day in devotions and visits to some poor sick people. In the evening, the saintly Prelate summoned all three into his presence and, placing in Madame de Chantal's hands a slight sketch of the first Constitutions to be followed, he gave them his solemn blessing. He had intended that the time of their departure for the Gallery House should be kept secret, but, when

the party left his house, they could scarcely move for the crowd of people, who respectfully escorted them. On reaching their new "hive," they found the little chapel full of ladies, who had come to bid Madame de Chantal farewell. At the gate, they were met by Anne Jacqueline Coste, formerly a poor maid-servant in an inn at Geneva, where she came into communication with Francis of Sales. Supernaturally informed of the projected foundation, she said one day to the Bishop: "I should like to be a servant to the nuns you are going to found." Though very much surprised, Francis readily promised a place to this so-called ignorant girl, in whom he had recognized clear discernment, simple purity, unshaken courage and faith firm as a rock. Anne Jacqueline knelt down at Madame de Chantal's feet and promised to obey her in all things, with great fidelity.

When, finally, they were left alone, the happy four knelt down and gave thanks to God, for having brought them into port and, giving one another the kiss of peace, they retired for the night. Madame de Chantal had just fallen into her first sleep, about two o'clock A.M., when the enemy woke her up

suddenly, showing her, her father and father-in-law loaded with grief and years, and her children crying vengeance before God against her; representing to her that she had tempted God in beginning a religious house without funds and a thousand other vain objections. The attack lasted two hours, and the only weapon of defence used by this valiant woman was to place herself resolutely in the hands of God.

Soon seven new members came to join the little band and share the real hardships of poverty and inconvenience that they had to undergo, for though President Favre and other friends were bountiful in their donations, there were times when the recluses had "neither bread, wine, oil, nor salt meat" and had only a few sous in the money box. Yet God Himself provided for them in a marvelous manner, so that a little cask of wine, given in alms, sufficed abundantly for more than a year. Meanwhile, Francis occupied himself with their rule and the manner of saying the Little Office of our Lady. Strange to say, Mother de Chantal found some difficulty in the pronunciation of the Latin, in the Psalms, but so important in her eyes was everything that related to the service of God, that she spent

several hours of the night in repeating again and again such verses as she had been told were faulty. In these beginnings, Francis had so entirely in view the active service of the poor, that he wished to call the Institute, the Congregation of Saint Martha, but a few days later, he decided that the name of the Sisters should be the Daughters of the Visitation, and that they should take for their model our Lady, leaving her solitude and seclusion at the call of charity, to visit her cousin Saint Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, and then returning to the hidden life at Nazareth.

Nothing was too great or too trifling for Francis of Sales to provide for. When the question of the habit was discussed, Madame de Chantal wanted the profession veils to be made of crêpe, which he would not allow, as being too expensive, but selected "étamine," a light, thin kind of bombazine, a dress of which the good mother cut up to make the veils, Francis himself shaping the back in the form still worn by the Visitation nuns.

At the same time, no one could be more exact and even severe in regard to faults against the high standard required by the Vows. When the day of

profession drew near, the Sisters persuaded their Mother to let them use for the decoration of the chapel and altar some money which the Bishop had left for the use of the sick, there being none else in the house. No sooner was the money spent, than Mother de Chantal, with great repentance, wrote to tell the Bishop of her disobedience. Not knowing the circumstances, he was deeply grieved, and in the morning, when she again accused herself of her fault, he said very gravely : "Daughter, this is your first disobedience to me ; it has given me a very bad night," and he passed on without another word, leaving her on her knees, in tears. But the lesson and the humble way in which it was received were never forgotten by the Sisters.

The Profession day was a lovely morning in June, 1611, when the holy Bishop received the Vows of his first daughters, in the presence of a large concourse of people. After the ceremony, many of the ladies wanted to congratulate Mother de Chantal on the fulfilment of her wishes, but the Bishop desired that, on so solemn a day, the Sisters should be left to themselves. Thus did our great Saint pledge herself to that "life of total sacrifice,

under vows," for which her ardent soul had so long yearned, and under sudden inspiration she said aloud, as she and her companions returned from the sanctuary to the choir: "Here is my rest; and here, will I abide forever," words which to this day are used in the ritual of Profession of the Sisters of the Visitation.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

LIFE AT THE GALLERY HOUSE. DEATHS AND CHANGES. NEW HOME. 1611–1617.

THE foundation-stones having been firmly set in place by the ceremony of solemn Profession, the work of the new Institute was vigorously carried forward. Francis, accompanied by his secretary and chaplain, the Reverend Michel Favre, would often go to the Convent and suggest to the Sisters their general plan of life and the spirit in which they should carry it out. He fixed the hour for rising, the order of the day, the allowance of food on fasting-days, the intercourse of the Sisters with one another, and provided in the most minute way for the welfare of

souls, the well-being and happiness of the least inmate of the house.

Every one in the Gallery House shared in the practical suffering of poverty and lowly service, and when a cow was bought, chiefly to supply milk for the poor, and the Sisters watched in turn that she did not browse the young shrubs in the orchard, Mother de Chantal took her hours of cow-keeping, as well as the others. Of the keener sufferings of mortification and want of food and rest, she took far more than the lion's share. A heavy blow was now being prepared for her, and the death of her aged father, so soon after her leaving him, caused our Saint many bitter pangs. Her boy Celse Bénigne was again thrown upon her hands, and she was obliged to go to Dijon and Bourbilly for two months, to provide for his education and other important affairs. During this stay in her own country, Mother de Chantal was much tormented by the efforts of her relatives to convince her that it was her positive duty to come and live among her own people. One of them having rudely remarked that, if her advice were followed, Mother de Chantal's "veil should be torn into a thousand bits," the Saint, with quiet dignity, re-

plied: "She that cares for her crown more than for her head, will not lose one without the other."

As soon as affairs were settled, Mother de Chantal returned in all haste to Annecy, where she was joyfully welcomed by the Sisters, on Christmas eve. A few days later, took place her first election as Superioress of the Community and the beginning of the service of the poor. Mother de Chantal always reserved to herself the most repulsive and disgusting cases, saying that then she seemed to be wiping the Wounds of our Saviour in His Passion.

Shortly afterwards, the Sisters abandoned their primitive beehive and removed to a larger house in the middle of the town, but the sale of their modest little house was hardly completed, when there arose general regret at having lost the scene of so many circumstances of interest to the Congregation; offers were made to the purchaser to buy it back again, but in vain. Nearly fifty years elapsed before the efforts of the Sisters met with success, and it was only in 1658, when its first occupants had long entered into their rest, that the Gallery House became once more the property of the Sisters of the Visitation.

Meanwhile, many poisoned arrows were directed against the new Congregation, some of the people saying that the Bishop of Geneva wasted his time with women, others that he had found for them a new way to Heaven, a path of roses without thorns; others again called it the "Confraternity of the Descent from the Cross," because, they said, the Sisters had taken our Lord off the Cross, by avoiding suffering, but the disinterested charity of the Sisters, in resigning a rich inheritance, through love of peace, though they were exceedingly poor, made the greatest impression upon the whole town.

Next came the good Christian death of the old Baron de Chantal, in 1613, and the Mother Foundress was again obliged to leave her convent, in order to look after her children's property and affairs. At Monthelon, the wretched housekeeper, who had brought such misery on the family was, to her own amazement, most kindly treated, though she still assumed airs of authority and importance. The old baron's affairs were in great confusion, but Mother de Chantal thought it best freely to forgive the tenants' dues for past years and, by dint of great patience, gentleness, and incessant toil, succeeded in setting in

order everything upon the property, then, after an absence of six busy weeks, went back to Annecy. Her return was followed by an attack of low fever, which brought her to the brink of the grave, but she was cured by the application of the relics of Saint Blaise and the prayers of Francis of Sales.

The Bishop now determined to build an entirely new convent for the Sisters, and the first stone was laid in 1614, in the presence of the Duchess Margaret of Mantua and the Infanta, or Princess Royal of Savoy, who was chosen as protector of the Institute, while the Duke himself, Charles Emmanuel, gave the ground for the building. The foundation of the convent at Lyons was the next important event, and led to a fundamental change in the plan and purpose of the new Congregation, the Visitation, contrary to the intention of the founder, but at the formal demand of the Cardinal de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, being erected into an Order, under the "Rule of Saint Augustin, with solemn vows and perpetual enclosure." This change seems to have been made in 1617, and this and the following year were employed in drawing up the Constitutions. This period was also marked by the publication by

the holy Bishop of his famous treatise of "*The Love of God*," which we mention here, because he himself says that it was written expressly for Mother de Chantal and a few of her favored daughters. All Europe raised one voice of admiring praise.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

DEATH OF BERNARD AND MARIE AIMÉE DE SALES. FOUNDATIONS. ANGELIQUE ARNAUD. DEATH OF FRANCIS DE SALES. 1617–1622.

THE pleasant task of drawing up the Visitation Rules was broken in upon by a double calamity, which with the same blow struck down the holy Bishop and Mother de Chantal. Bernard de Sales, who had just spent two months of peaceful happiness with his girl-wife at the old castle of Sales, was suddenly summoned to arms and ordered to lead his troops across the Alpine pass to Vercelli. In camp there, he was stricken by malignant fever and, resigning himself to die, not by the sword, but by disease, he generously offered to God the sacrifice of his bright, happy life of thirty-four years, then he implored a blessing on his wife, received the last

Sacraments, and died without pain, as a "young saint among the soldiers." The holy Bishop himself told the sad news to Marie Aimée, who, in spite of her anguish, spent the day in making acts of love, thanksgiving and submission. Three months glided by, then the little Baroness gave birth to a son, who lived only long enough to be baptized. Sudden and acute illness soon set in for the young mother, and she knew that she must put her house in order and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. Francis heard her confession and gave her holy Viaticum, then Marie Aimée asked to receive the habit of a novice, which was given her, before Extreme Unction was administered. Afterwards, at her earnest request, with the consent of the Community, the Bishop gave her the black veil and received her vows. A few hours later, she said gently: "Here is death; now I must make ready to go." Then, pronouncing three times the Name of Jesus, she went to her rest. This beautiful life had lasted but little more than nineteen years, during which Marie Aimée de Chantal had become a maiden, a wife, a mother, a widow, a religious and, we may believe, a soul beloved of God.

This premature ending of two such beautiful lives afflicted Mother de Chantal with no common sorrow, and hers was not a character to throw off the grief of losses, which pierced her heart, but, most opportunely, numerous foundations of her Order now claimed her attention, and she was obliged to provide for the swarms which, successively, left the mother hive at Annecy, for Moulins, Grenoble and Bourges. Then Francis summoned her to Paris, to prepare the way for an establishment, to prevent which, for three weeks, all kinds of underhand intriguing went on, but, suddenly, one day Cardinal de Retz wrote with his own hand the permission for the Community to settle in Paris. Soon, a most fearful pestilence broke out, the city was deserted, and grass was seen growing in the streets; the Sisters had neither food, nor fire, nor furniture, but bore with true heroism these extraordinary hardships, sustained and comforted by the cheerfulness of their mother. Then the entrance of a wealthy postulant brought temporal relief, and with her dowry, Mother de Chantal bought a large house in the "*rue Saint Antoine*," to which the Community removed in 1621.

It was at this time that Mother de Chantal be-

came acquainted with the celebrated Angélique Arnauld, the Abbess of Port Royal, who thought of resigning the command of her abbey, to embrace the practice of obedience, among the Sisters of the Visitation. Francis, with prophetic eye, was not inclined to favor this change, but Mother de Chantal was ready to accept Angélique as a novice. It was determined to abide by the decision of Rome, which was delayed until after the holy Foundress had left Paris and the Bishop of Geneva had gone to his reward. Later, under the evil influence of the Abbé de Saint Cyran, this splendidly gifted soul became the embodiment of the spirit of Port Royal, of those nuns, of whom the Archbishop of Paris said that they were "pure as angels, and proud as fiends," but by the failure of Angélique's attempt to enter the order, the Visitation was saved from the insidious poison of Jansenism.

In the summer of 1620, Françoise, Saint Chantal's only remaining daughter, was married to the Count de Toulonjon, a Burgundian gentleman of an old family, and the Saint went to Paris, to give her child a marriage blessing. This union of principle, rather than fancy, was productive of great happiness,

shadowed by the death of their first children and the absences of the Count on military service. During one of these times of loneliness and anxiety, Mother de Chantal and six of her nuns, on their way to found a new house at Dijon, filled with gladness the old castle of Alonne, the home of Françoise. At Dijon, great opposition was made by the parliament to the foundation of the convent, but finally, Letters Patent were obtained from the king, Louis the Thirteenth, and the whole population, who evidently did not sympathize with the civic authorities, crowded the streets to meet Saint Chantal. In the evening, about two hundred peasants from the neighboring villages came to welcome her and were most cordially received. Before leaving, they all went down on their knees, and refused to rise until she had given them her blessing.

Here, Mother de Chantal received a letter from Francis de Sales, telling her to meet him at Lyons, but when she got there, she found it difficult to obtain a visit from him, as he had so much to do, on account of the presence of the courts of France and Savoy. When at last he came to the convent, it seemed to her as if the glory of Heaven was already

reflected upon him and showed itself through the veil of the body. He said to her: "Mother, we have some hours before us; which of us shall begin the conversation?" "Let me, if you please, Father," she replied, with a little of her old impetuosity, "my soul has great need to be reviewed by you," but he told her gently that that would be done at Annecy, they must now speak of the affairs of their little Congregation. Mother de Chantal, without an objection, folded up the papers relating to her conscience and she and the Bishop spent four successive hours in regulating what was still necessary for the complete organization of the Order. This was the last interview on earth of these two saintly souls, as, in obedience to duty, Mother de Chantal immediately returned to Annecy. Two weeks later, on December twenty-seventh, Francis was stricken down with apoplexy and paralysis; he lingered in agony for thirty hours, and while the invocation, "*All ye Holy Innocents pray for him*," of the Litany for a Departing Soul were being said, "the doors of his prison house were opened," and the beautiful soul of Francis de Sales soared to eternal freedom.

At that moment, Mother de Chantal in the chapel

at Grenoble, distinctly heard a voice saying," *He is no more!*" Not thinking of his death, but of the wondrous transformation she had seen in him, she exclaimed: "*No, my God, he is no more; he lives no longer; it is Thou who livest in him!*" Not a single foreboding troubled her, as she left Grenoble for Belley, where the terrible news was communicated to her. For one whole day and night, her tears flowed gently, but without stopping, until after her Communion the next morning. The following day, she went on to Annecy to make ready the chapel to receive the sacred remains of the holy Founder. What Mother de Chantal felt on hearing that Mr. Olier, the chief magistrate of the province, had prohibited the removal of the body, cannot be described. For the first time in her life she used words of command to Mother de Blonay, the Superioress at Lyons: "I beseech you and, if I may dare, I command you to do this,"—that is, every thing possible to hasten the departure of the holy body. She wrote to the Duke of Savoy, to the Mayor and Syndics of Annecy and, in short, acted with such energy and prompt resolution, that all opposition was withdrawn. On the arrival of the funeral train at Annecy, a short

visit was made to the church, then the coffin was borne into the chapel of the Visitation and placed in the sanctuary, close to the nuns' choir.

"We will talk about ourselves at Annecy," Francis had said, so, obedient to him in death, as she had been in life, Mother de Chantal knelt beside the coffin and opened her whole soul to him. What passed between them is God's secret, but when she returned to the Community, her whole manner was changed, as of one infinitely comforted and refreshed.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

WORK OF ORGANIZATION. FOUNDATIONS. MARRIAGE OF CELSE BÉNIGNE. HIS DEATH. THE PLAGUE. 1622–1629.

MOTHER DE CHANTAL was well aware that upon her it now depended to carry on the work of Francis of Sales; she showed herself prepared and promptly took her measures. Her first step was solemnly to lay aside her office as Superior, according to the Rules of the Visitation, much to the consternation of the nuns, but, a few days later, they had their revenge by unanimously electing Mother de Chantal

perpetual Superior. This election she declared to be null and void, as contrary to the Rules and Constitutions of the Order; her firmness triumphed over the importunity of the Sisters, and, finally, she was re-elected for three years only. Then she called a special council of Superiors, to consult in regard to the usages and customs of the Order, and the result of these labors is contained in three books: first, the *Rule of Saint Angustin*, translated into French by Francis of Sales; second, the *Constitutions and Directory*, drawn up by the holy Bishop, to explain and adapt that Rule; and the *Custom Book*, put together from his notes and papers. When this last was completed, it was laid by Mother de Chantal upon the Founder's grave, where she sent all the Sisters to pray that every word and thought, contrary to his intention, might be blotted out of it.

The next work undertaken by the saintly Mother was a commentary on the Visitation Rules, known as the "*Answers of our Holy Mother*," which was afterwards printed without her knowledge. Deeply grieved on being apprised of the fact, she sent for all the copies intrusted to the bookseller, and henceforth none were allowed outside the convents.

The year 1624 was marked by the marriage of Mother de Chantal's only son, Celse Bénigne, now Baron de Chantal, with Marie de Coulanges, which relieved his mother of much anxiety, so that she turned with refreshed powers to the arduous work of the new foundations. Thirteen convents had been established before Francis of Sales closed his eyes in peace, the fourteenth was opened just after his death and by 1626, eleven new ones were added to the list.

In that same year, Mother de Chantal's superiority, according to the Rule, came to an end, but the nuns at Orleans elected her for their own convent; as Francis of Sales had laid it down that she should not attach herself to any one single house but that of Annecy, she did not accept the office, but went to Orleans to assist at the election of another Superior. Just as she was leaving Annecy, she met a gentleman, who was suffering from violent attacks in the head and who was immediately cured by the touch of her hand. At Crémieux, where a foundation was to begin, a fierce fire went out at her prayer, as if quenched by a sudden deluge of water. Mother de Chantal remained three months at Orleans and then

proceeded to Paris, where a storm of hostility had been raised against the Sisters, on account of the successful foundation of a second house, almost without resources.

Meanwhile, another trial was impending over this noble-hearted mother. Celse Bénigne's marriage not having done all that had been hoped for him, his escapades continued until he lost favor with the king and disgrace hung over him at court. In order, as it were, to redeem his reputation, the young man offered himself among the noble volunteers, who, in 1627, tried to hinder the English from landing for the relief of La Rochelle. He made his confession and received Holy Communion with every sign of earnest faith; then, after having been wounded twenty-seven times and had three horses killed under him, he was seen to join his hands, imploring the mercy of God and fell with honor, in a just cause.

Mother de Chantal was startled out of this fresh sorrow, by the appearance of a dreadful epidemic, called at the time "*la grande peste*," one of the most frightful that ever ravaged Europe; the towns were deserted except for the sick and dying, and even the fields were left untilled; Mother de Chantal's great

motherly heart both suffered and rejoiced; for, while she could not but rejoice at the heroic virtue practised so generally in her convents, she could not help grieving, like a true mother, over the loss of many "pearls" of virtue, and felt to her very heart's core the poverty, the absolute want and the forsaken condition of her beloved daughters. She bent the full force of her energies and capacity and all the influence she could bring, to gather means and help; she sent to the various houses supplies of corn, medicines, clothing, shoes, and to one, a whole flock of sheep, while to all, she wrote words of encouragement, advice, and the tenderest comfort and support. In the midst of her anxieties and exertions, the holy Foundress received an order from the Bishop of Annecy, to return home at once, without stopping on the road at any of the infected houses. It was a cruel order, but she obeyed it strictly, passing by the very gates of some of her convents. She wrote an urgent letter to her daughter Françoise, begging her to help the poor nuns, whom their Mother might not even see, and, to support her request, went to Alonne to visit Françoise. The Superioress of Autun, Mother Marie Hélène de Chastelluz, obtained leave

to go near the road, along which Mother de Chantal was to pass, and wait for her in a field, at some distance and against the wind. But when the holy Mother saw her, she could not contain herself and, making the Sign of the Cross, exclaimed: "Let us meet in God's Name!" Running towards Mother de Chastelluz, she kissed her and made her get into the carriage, at which Françoise was so terribly frightened, that she afterwards said she would have been ready to die of fear, if she had not known that her mother was a saint, and, in fact, no harm came of it.

At Châlons-sur-Saône, where her nephew had just been appointed Bishop, Saint Chantal met with a perfect ovation, and she grieved bitterly when she found that the Ursulines actually cut off a great piece of her veil, but her skill in trying to avoid such marks of honor was useless, and it is recorded that, as long as she remained there, she daily lost some fragments of her veil and habit. Mother de Chantal reached Annecy towards the end of 1628, and was re-elected Superior shortly after her arrival. Never was there a time when the Sisters had greater need of their Mother's presence and counsels, for, at this

juncture, the dreaded pestilence invaded this secluded spot among the mountains. Letters from all sides poured in, begging Mother de Chantal to seek safety elsewhere, but nothing could induce her to abandon her post. After writing to the Superiors of her convents a circular letter, which she felt might be her last, she gave herself up to helping, comforting, and relieving the sick poor, distributing with unsparing hand all that she had, until food and money were gone. A fresh supply of corn, and wine, which was given her, was miraculously multiplied, and far outlasted natural limits. She, moreover, stirred up the zeal of the Bishop and a few devoted friends and excited to heroic charity the syndic and some leading people of Annecy, whose preservation was owing, they felt, to the wearing of *Agnus Dei*, sent by Mother de Chantal with the assurance that they who wore them should not be attacked by the disease. The Bishop himself, John Francis de Sales, acknowledged in strong words the help given by her prayers: "O my noble Mother!" he exclaimed, "you are my Moses and I am your Joshua. So long as you hold up your hands to Heaven, I and mine shall fight against the woes of our people."

Through all this season of death and desolation, the convent bell struck its note of peace and the sound of prayer and holy office went up as usual, as if life and death were merged in that blessed eternity, on which their souls were fixed. The daily occupations were never intermitted, but in order to stay the terrible plague, the Sisters heartily and cheerfully took upon themselves fasts upon bread and water, penances and processions bare-footed, with ropes round their necks. The disease never reached the convent. Speaking later on, of this time, when there was little or no communication with the world, Saint Chantal said that she had never known such peace, and that, but for the sufferings of the people, she would have wished it to last forever. At length the plague ceased, but it helped mainly to carry out, but on a much larger scale, the first plan of the Founder of the Visitation. It is thought that Mother de Chantal's constant intercourse with Saint Vincent de Paul at Paris must have stirred up to new energy the gentle and prudent "Saint of the Poor," but certain it is, that in 1634, after the scourge of the plague had died out, "the daughters of Saint Vincent de Paul were

embodied in their first modest shape" and Saint Vincent himself so entirely ascribed the first idea of their creation to the Visitation Foundress, that he often called the Sisters of Charity "Madame de Chantal's Legacy."

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

ILLNESS OF FRANÇOISE.—STEPS FOR THE CANONIZATION OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES.—DEATHS.—SECOND HOUSE AT ANNECY. 1629–1634.

WHILE Mother de Chantal was thus devoting herself, heart, soul, and body, in the service of God at Annecy, Françoise was busied in establishing a convent of Visitandines at Pignerol, the "key of Italy," of which her husband had been appointed governor. In the midst of her labors, she fell dangerously ill of fever, and it seemed as if God was about to take from the saintly mother her only remaining child.

A messenger from the governor was sent to Annecy, to pray at the tomb of Francis of Sales, carry the tidings to Mother de Chantal and obtain the powerful help of her prayers. With clasped

hands, she received the "bad news," and resigned herself to God's holy Will, but the next morning, at Holy Communion, she received the assurance of immediate answer to her prayer, and Françoise rapidly recovered.

Mother de Chantal, meanwhile, occupied herself in the completion of the Visitation Rule and in obtaining multiplied proofs of the graces obtained by the intercession of Francis of Sales, to lead the way to the opening of his canonization. The years of the pestilence had witnessed the most marvelous manifestation of the power of this beloved Bishop his charity seeming to be available in every possible need. From the relic of his heart at Lyons continually flowed a sweet liquid, resembling fragrant oil, from which circumstance, the Lyonnese called the nuns "the Daughters of the Heart." The sanctity of the meek Bishop of Geneva was proved beyond denial, by numberless miracles, and a very short time after his death he was canonized by the popular voice. Mother de Chantal had copies of his books distributed in various countries, and collected with care every scrap of his letters, sermons, and treatises, to from a good edition of his works.

It was while turning over the manuscripts of the Saint, that the holy Mother came across the bundle of her own letters to him, filed according to date, with marginal notes in his own hand. Astonished and confused, she shed many tears, then impetuously seized the packet and threw it into the fire. Mother de Chantal also made the Sisters write down whatever they could recollect of their personal intercourse or experience with Francis, to serve as notes for his life, the writing of which she intrusted to his nephew Charles Augustus de Sales and Father de la Rivière.

Three Apostolic Commissaries having been appointed by the Sacred Congregation of Rites at Rome, to inquire into the virtues and miracles of the servant of God, Mother de Chantal was the first witness examined by them and, on the whole, she spent forty-two hours in answering the questions put to her in regard to her holy director. Nothing more was done for six years after the pestilence and then, again, it was Mother de Chantal who urged on the conclusion of the inquiry and the opening of the Bishop's grave. We will not here dwell upon that impressive scene, at which the people of Annecy gazed in wondering joy, nor on the marvelous and

solemn sight of the saintly Bishop, lying in his coffin, unchanged and serene, as if placed there only a few days before, but only tell how Mother de Chantal remained throughout, motionless, upon her knees, rapt in prayer, behind the nuns' grating. The commissaries had forbidden the body to be touched, under pain of excommunication, so she carefully abstained from kissing one of the hands, as she longed to do. The next day, however, she obtained the permission, and as she bent her head to touch the hand of Francis with her lips, his arm was lifted up and laid upon her head, with a gentle pressure, as if he had been living. Mother de Chantal not only felt the act, but several Sisters who were present, saw the movement of the hand and fingers, as it was done. The veil which she then wore is still preserved as a twofold relic.

Twenty years were to elapse before Francis of Sales was canonized, yet in these, her latter days, the holy Foundress had the great consolation of knowing that, whether she lived to see the end or not, her unwearied exertions and ceaseless prayers had placed her Blessed Father on the altars of the Church.

It was, however, but the prelude to impending sorrow, which had so large a part in the life of this valiant woman. First, Mother de Chantal's young daughter-in-law, Marie de Coulanges, peacefully passed away, leaving in charge of Madame de Toulonjon, her little girl, Marie de Chantal, afterwards the famous Madame de Sévigné. The second was a heavier blow, the departure from this life of the Count de Toulonjon, when Françoise had just given birth to a little son. With unshaken faith and love, he offered his life and all his dear ones to God and, after receiving the Last Sacraments, he died as he had lived, modest, silent, and God-fearing, a truly valiant man of France. To this deep sorrow, soon succeeded the death of M. Michel Favre, the Bishop of Geneva's faithful priest. Three and twenty years had this true pastor been thoroughly devoted to the Visitation, serving the Sisters in a most painstaking and laborious spirit. Before he died, M. Michel thought it right to declare aloud his opinion that Mother de Chantal was one of the greatest servants of God then on earth.

One of his last wishes had been the foundation of a second convent of the Visitation at Annecy, and

when, only two days after his death, preliminary steps were taken, the holy Foundress felt that in Heaven he had obtained his long cherished desire. The establishment took place on Trinity Sunday, 1634, just twenty-four years since, at the Gallery House, was sowed the one solitary seed of an Order, that now numbered sixty-five houses.

CHAPTER NINTH.

ASSEMBLY OF THE BISHOPS AT PARIS. VISITS TO CONVENTS. DEATH OF FIRST COMPANIONS. FOUNDATION OF TURIN. 1635–1639.

In 1635, was held at Paris, the general Assembly of the French clergy, and the Bishop of Geneva, John Francis of Sales decided that Mother de Chantal should go there to discuss with them the question of a general Superior for the Visitation. His death delayed her departure for a time, so that it was not until July, 1635, that she reached Paris. In the presence of several Bishops, Saint Vincent de Paul, the Commander de Sillery, and some chief benefactors of the Institute, Mother de Chantal advanced with great modesty, and in clear and vigorous terms, that

Francis of Sales had foreseen and provided for the maintenance of one spirit in the Order, by union among the houses and union and conformity with Annecy, "like children with their mother,"—"receiving from her not only the institutions, customs, and manner of acting, but also intelligence for the practice of them and the elucidation of difficulties." Her words carried conviction to the minds of all, and they unanimously agreed to trust the perpetuation of the spirit of the holy Founder, to the golden bond of charity, which he had placed within it as a nobler and more effective bond than that of authority.

Having obtained permission from Annecy, Mother de Chantal made Paris the starting-point for a general visit to her convents, that she might examine whether the spirit of the blessed Francis was maintained intact, but she fell ill at Tours and was obliged to return to Paris for the winter. It was at this time that the Sisters in Paris secured the legacy of her heart after death, though they afterwards waived their right, in consideration of the services Madame de Montmorency had rendered the Order, and the heart was retained at Moulins.

In April, 1636, the visitation was resumed, and

everywhere the holy Foundress was received with transports of joy, and more than one miracle marked her progress through France. It is recorded that the Bishop of Rennes, with the frank simplicity of the Bretons, knelt down and asked for Mother de Chantal's blessing, which so shocked her, that she could not speak a single word, but stood with tears in her eyes, trembling all over. Frequently she had to rise soon after midnight, to secure the hearing of Mass before starting afresh, and fasted until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when she obtained only scanty and unpalatable food, while her days were spent in constant work and nearly unintermitted conversation, yet Mother de Chantal was ever bright, cheerful and uncomplaining, taking upon herself the weight of every burden. She would not even let her daughter Françoise know when she was going into Burgundy, lest she should convey her in state to the different convents. Everywhere, she exhorted the religious to humility, obedience, and, above all, charity, so warmly, so unweariedly, that Sister Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugy once said to her: "Mother, I shall write to every one that you are like your godfather Saint John, and say nothing but

'Love one another.'" The holy Mother looked grave and begged the Sister not to profane the Saints' names, but acknowledged that were it not for fear of tiring the Sisters she should never speak to them of anything but love.

When about to leave Avignon, Mother de Chantal received an order from the Bishop to return at once to Annecy, as he feared that extreme fatigue would completely exhaust her strength, and she obeyed at once, going home to begin that series of interior trials which lasted for nine entire years. Often she could neither eat nor sleep, and at night was heard to groan in agony. It seemed to her that God had forsaken her, that He looked at her as an offended Judge, or irritated Master, and drove her away from His loving care. She said that nothing on earth gave her the least relief, but the one word *Death*, but she was bright and cheerful, met and conversed with the Sisters with an unchanged face, for, in the quaint words of Mother de Chaugy: "In vain did the storms beat upon this rose of love; it was always fresh and shedding its delicious fragrance."

Now she was to be gradually stripped of all

things, and one blow rapidly followed another. On June 14 1637, Mother Marie Jacqueline Favre, her "great daughter," who had borne with her the heat and burden of the day, joyfully and peacefully breathed out her soul, at the still vigorous age of eight and forty. Then, as if one blessed spirit released had obtained leave for others to follow, Mother de Chantal returned from burying Mother Favre at Chambéry, only to find Mother Péronne Marie de Châtel, ready to depart. On the twenty-second of October, 1637, she gave up her soul into God's Hands, at the age of fifty-one. Three weeks later, Mother Jane Charlotte de Bréchard died at Riom, and so many signal and heroic acts were declared of this first of the "foundation stones," that the Acts of her Canonization were begun with those of Saint Chantal. The holy Mother, in her humility, wrote of those three cherished Sisters: "They were ripe fruits meet to be served at the heavenly King's table;" but that she was left "hanging on the bough still green, or mildewed and worm-eaten."

In the spring of 1638, Mother de Chantal was again elected Superior at Annecy and, shortly after, was obliged to go in person to found a new Convent

at Turin. Everywhere on her way, honor was paid to her as a saint, the peasantry left their villages in crowds and lined the roads, along which she passed, kneeling down to ask for her blessing. Some months' toil were needed to establish the Convent on a firm footing, so that it was in 1639, that Mother de Chantal returned to Annecy, in anguish of mind about the safety of her Sisters of Turin and Pignerol, who were in extreme danger on account of the war between France and Spain, but even this calamity wrought good to the loyal servants of God.

This was the last of Mother de Chantal's foundations and yet, it may be said, no mention has been made of the work of teaching in connection with the Visitation. How is it that it is now so general in the Institute? It may be well to make a digression to answer this often-repeated question. "The schools of the Visitation sprang from the needs of the times, from the force of circumstances, much more than from the will of the Founders." For a long time, the Sisters even refused their consent to the measure, but were at last constrained to yield to the popular desire, though with great precautions, as they feared that such a charge would embarrass, or

distract the religious. It is true Saint Francis of Sales allowed them to receive a few children, about ten or twelve years of age, "of good sense and good natural disposition," with an inclination for the religious life, and whose entrance was to be "advantageous to the glory of God and the prosperity of the Community." These children were called the Sisters of the Little Habit. In time many more than the number allowed, in a manner forced the doors of these Convents, where intellectual culture was united to elevation of heart and beauty of soul, so that boarding-schools were in existence at the Visitation as early as 1635. The pupils of the Visitation were soon to be found in the various walks of life, even in the highest ranks of society, diffusing everywhere its peculiar characteristic of mildness and simplicity, which is so essentially the spirit of the holy Founder. The only words Saint Chantal wrote on the subject of education are the following, in regard to the Sisters of the Little Habit: "They shall be tenderly instructed and formed in spirituality, according to their little capacity," and this continues to be the aim of her daughters, in the education of the young.

In 1639, Archbishop Frémiot, our Saint's brother, died at Paris, full of faith and joy ; she grieved much over this loss and sent everywhere to beg prayers for the departed soul. Once more, and for the last time, Mother de Chantal laid down her office of Superior, in the spring of 1641. Mother de Blonay, the only remaining nun of the first few chosen by Francis of Sales, was elected in her place ; then was witnessed that rare sight of a daily strife of genuine humility between the new Superioress and the deposed Mother, until the Bishop interfered, and ordered Mother de Blonay to allow the holy Foundress to humble herself by fidelity to the least practices of the Rule, after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Would to Heaven," added the Bishop, "that there might never be any contention but such as this between the Superiors elect and the Superiors deposed of the Visitation !" The old memoirs tell that at this time, Mother de Chantal seemed so extraordinarily sweet and amiable, so occupied with God and eternal things, that many of the Sisters feared that the shining light of her sanctity was now at its last blaze of brilliancy.

CHAPTER TENTH.

LAST JOURNEY AND DEATH. 1641.

MEANWHILE, the widowed Duchess of Montmorency, who had for nine years mourned the untimely death of her noble husband, and who, in 1635, had taken up her abode at the Visitation of Moulins, made up her mind to enter the Order, and earnestly begged to receive the veil from the hands of the holy Foundress herself. Mother de Blonay and the Bishop did not like the idea of her undertaking so long a journey at her advanced age ; even the town magistrates interfered and sent a deputation to beg the Duke of Savoy to forbid Mother de Chantal to leave his dominions, but many considerations weighed in favor of the Duchess of Montmorency and the journey to Moulins was decided upon. The parting at Annecy was very sad, for the Sisters felt it was the last. As they assembled in tears around their holy Foundress, she spoke to them a few encouraging words, recommending the love of our good Saviour and union of hearts, and telling them of her

own love of them; then she embraced them all and said to each some little private word of counsel and remembrance. A dense crowd filled up the road outside the convent gate, to bid her farewell; the poor people came out of their doors to look at her; the sick dragged themselves to their windows to see her pass; it was the last time Annecy saw her alive. On her way, Mother de Chantal paid short visits to several of her houses, and near Alonne was met by her daughter Françoise, who was to convey her mother to Moulins, in her own carriage.

Madame de Montmorency met the holy Foundress with reverential joy, and the latter was soon convinced that this grand woman was a true saint, visibly guided by God Himself. When the queen, Anne of Austria, heard of Mother de Chantal's presence at Moulins, she sent for her to come to the palace of Saint Germain, talked to her of her own spiritual state and affairs, kissed her hand, and treated her with affectionate respect. At Paris, she was obliged to get up at three o'clock in the morning, to confer with the crowds that asked to see her, yet she was always calm, modest, affable, her face beaming with divine love and humility. Here, she had the conso-

lation of seeing Saint Vincent de Paul and opening her heart to him for the last time, when she was delivered from the nine years' anguish of interior trials, which had oppressed her. Two days she spent in deep and earnest conversation with Mother Angélique Arnaud, at Port Royal, and seems not to have clearly discerned the danger hanging over the young abbess.

On November eleventh, Mother de Chantal left Paris and visited three of her houses, on her way back to Moulins, where the Sisters found her quite changed, and she herself was convinced that she had only come back to them to die. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, having risen with the Community, the holy Mother was attacked by the chills of fever, during meditation, but refused to go back to bed until after Holy Communion as, that day, it was exactly thirty-one years since Francis of Sales had allowed her to communicate daily. The physician, finding the Saint seriously ill, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, novenas were begun, and several of the Sisters offered their lives for her, but, as Mother de Chaugy beautifully observes: "The wings of that dove, now soaring to the eternal home, were

far stronger to bear her thither than all the means that were used to keep her on earth."

Mother de Chantal sent for the Jesuit Father de Lingendes, to hear her confession. On December twelfth, she received Holy Viaticum, raising herself up at the approach of her Lord and making aloud a fervent act of faith, after which she asked the confessor of the Community, in presence of the Sisters to give her the Holy Oils, at the proper time. When it was proposed to bring the Holy Viaticum again, shortly after midnight, she humbly refused, saying that the Community and the time of silence must not be disturbed. The next day, she was able to dictate her last instructions to the Order, recommending obedience to the intentions of Francis of Sales, peace with one another, and union among the houses begging the Sisters to show great respect, reverence, and confidence towards Madame de Montmorency. Mother de Chantal concluded this beautiful letter, by begging the prayers of her children and promising to ask their Blessed Father to give them the spirit of humility, which alone could preserve the Order, then signed the letter with her own name. Through all the last night, Mother de Chantal never

slept; she listened with great attention to the reading of the Passion, and asked to have read to her Saint Jerome's account of Saint Paula's death and the death of Saint Francis of Sales, that she might conform to his example. Afterwards one of the Sisters read to her the Ninth Chapter of his *Love of God.* About nine o'clock on the morning of December thirteenth, the dying Saint received Extreme Unction and answered all the prayers; then, at the express desire of Father de Lingendes, she blessed the Sisters, all weeping round her; they came one by one, to kiss her hand, and she spoke to each a last little word of advice. Once during the day, Mother de Chantal suddenly recalled the priest and said: "O Father! I assure you God's judgments are terrible," and, on his asking her if she was frightened, she answered: "Not so; but I assure you God's judgments are terrible!" Towards evening, the Community came to say the prayers for the departing soul, and Father de Lingendes having said to her that God having given us our soul through love, it is love which causes Him to take it back to Himself, a thrill of joy passed through her, and she answered: "Oh, how sweet is that thought!"

A blessed taper was then lighted and put into one hand, the crucifix, with the little bag, containing her profession of faith and her vows, in the other; she was breathing with difficulty, and Father de Lingendes said: "Mother, these sharp pains are the cry which announces the Bridegroom's coming. He is here, He is at hand; will you go forth to meet Him?"

"Yes, Father," she answered, "I am going. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!"—and immediately her soul went forth to its rest in God.

Madame de Montmorency closed the eyes and kissed the feet of the Saint, bathing them with her tears. While preparing for the burial, she and the Sisters discovered and venerated the sacred Name of Jesus, branded indelibly on her side. After the body was embalmed, by Madame de Montmorency's orders, it lay in the chapel for two days, to satisfy the devotion of the crowds, and then this blessed body, "in which so noble a guest had lodged," was secretly carried away to Annecy, that, according to Mother de Chantal's own wish, she might rest at the cradle of the holy Order, not far from the relics of its blessed Founder.

LIFE OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE.

LIFE OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE.

CHAPTER FIRST.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YEARS.

NOT far from the old manor of Terreau, in the village of Vérosvres, in the Charolais, away from the noise of the highways, was born, on the twenty-second of July, 1647, one whom our Lord had chosen to be the apostle of His Sacred Heart and to love Him not less ardently than His penitent lover, Saint Mary Magdalen, whose feast is celebrated on that day. The father of Margaret Mary Alacoque was judge of Terreau, remarkable for his uncommon liberality towards the poor, though he possessed but a very moderate fortune. The good use he thus made of his means drew down the blessing of God upon his marriage with Philiberte Lamyn. They had four

children, three boys and an only girl, Margaret, who was baptized three days after her birth, her godmother being Marguerite de Saint-Amour, wife of Claude de Fautrières-Corcheval, lord of Vérosvres.

"From her tenderest years, grace reigned supreme in the heart of this privileged child and, young as she was, her conversation was in Heaven, for where her Treasure was, there also was her heart. Madame de Fautrières was desirous to undertake the education of her godchild, and Margaret was accordingly sent to Corcheval, when only four years of age. Notwithstanding the luxury of her surroundings and the dangerous influence of a worldly-minded woman, to whose care the child was intrusted, Margaret's soul remained pure and unsullied. With a supernatural instinct, she felt that God did not dwell in the heart of this person, therefore she avoided the woman's society, and sought that of another attendant, who led the life of a good Christian, though her unprepossessing exterior was little calculated to win the child's affection."

"Margaret found her greatest happiness in prayer, and as there was a chapel attached to the castle, it was easy for her to follow this attraction. There,

she was to be found, kneeling as close as possible to the Tabernacle, her hands joined, and, in the fervor of her love, resembling the Angels, whose purity she already strove to imitate." The thought that then occupied Margaret was, as she herself tells us, "to consume herself in our Lord's presence, as the candles she saw burning on the altars." "Margaret felt constantly urged to repeat the following words, without understanding their meaning: 'My God, I consecrate to Thee my purity, and I make to Thee a vow of perpetual Chastity,'" and, one day in particular, she pronounced these words between the two Elevations at Mass. It was thus our Lord permeated this chosen soul, with the blessings of His sweetness," while our Blessed Mother watched with maternal care over the little betrothed of her divine Son. Every day, Margaret said the beads, kneeling on the bare ground, which she kissed at each "*Hail Mary*."

"On her return to Vérosvres, Margaret continued in the same holy dispositions, her only desire being to hide herself from the eyes of the world, the better to enjoy intimate union with her God. She was never happier than when she could retire into the woods and spend long hours in uninterrupted prayer,

and had she been sure of unbroken solitude, would willingly have become a hermit in the beautiful woods of Burgundy. As Saint Teresa had, in her childhood, longed to seek among the Moors the crown of martyrdom, so did our little Margaret long to take refuge in some solitary spot, to devote herself to prayer. Without leaving her country, or shedding her blood, she discovered the secret of leading a life of perpetual sacrifice; and the severity with which she even then treated her innocent body, was but a prelude to the thirst for sufferings which was one day to consume her soul."

"It was not long before the cross was presented to this generous heart. Margaret's sorrows commenced with the death of her father, when she was not yet eight years old. Her mother then sent her to school to the Urbanists, Poor Clares of the mitigated rule, at Charolles, where she made her First Communion "and conceived the desire of being a religious, that she might become a saint, like the nuns, with whom she lived." "Beloved by her mistresses and companions, Margaret might have been attracted to the innocent pleasures of her age, but our Lord took care to mingle such bitterness with

all her little enjoyments, that the child soon learned the vanity of everything in this world, and that God alone is capable of satisfying the human heart."

Then, too, our Lord visited Margaret with a serious illness, which brought her to the verge of the grave. Having been taken home, she continued for four years in this pitiable state of unspeakable suffering and unable to walk. Her malady baffled the skill of the physicians, and was to be cured by no human means. Heaven itself was to interpose. No sooner had Margaret made a vow that, if she recovered her health, she would become a religious, a daughter of the Blessed Virgin, in some strict order, devoted to honor this Mother of mercy, than our Lady vouchsafed at once to cure her client. Margaret tells us that Mary then became the Mistress of her heart, reproved her for her faults, and taught her to do the will of God. She adds: "It happened once that, having seated myself to say my Rosary, she appeared to me and gave me this reproof, which has never been effaced from my mind, although I was then very young: 'What! my daughter, is it thus negligently that you serve me?'" The impression produced lasted, indeed, her whole life.

With the return of health, there awoke in Margaret's heart the love of the world and its amusements, for which she had a natural inclination. She tells us that she began to take pleasure in dress and every kind of diversion, but God's designs were very different from hers, and He, whose Sacred Heart had "brought her forth with so much pain on Calvary," soon showed her that the life He there gave her could be sustained only by the food of the cross.

"After the death of her husband, Madame Alacoque was deprived of all authority in her own house and was soon reduced to a sort of social captivity shared by her daughter." They had no power whatever and could do nothing without the permission of three persons, on whose caprice they were dependent. These circumstances made their lives a continued martyrdom, one long succession of acts of abnegation and self-denial, but it was then that Margaret's whole affection turned towards the Blessed Sacrament, in which she sought all her pleasure and consolation. The heaviest of her crosses in this state of absolute dependence was being unable to alleviate her mother's sufferings in her frequent

illnesses. This the poor girl felt especially when her mother had a severe attack of erysipelas in the head, about which no one was troubled, for which no one thought to provide a remedy. Being assured by a petty village surgeon, who was called in to bleed the patient that, *unless by miracle, she could not recover*, Margaret was in desolation, but she turned with confidence to our Lord and His Blessed Mother, who had never failed her. Her prayer was immediately heard, for an abscess broke, and with only such care as her inexperienced nurse could give her, Madame Alacoque was, in a few days, perfectly restored to health.

Sorrow came also in the death of two of her brothers in the very flower of youth, but Margaret's own sufferings made her better able to sympathize with others, and especially with the misery of the poor. In their person, she saw Jesus Christ, her Saviour and her God; to please Him, no sacrifice was great enough, no self-denial hard enough, and it was her joy to dress and kiss their wounds. For love of Him, the young girl attracted to herself, by little gifts of money, poor children, in order to teach them their prayers and the catechism. Soon, she

gathered round her quite a little band, but was often at a loss, in winter-time, for a suitable place in which to give the instruction. One day, her brother Chrysostom, coming unexpectedly upon her, surrounded by these little ones, said: "Sister, do you intend to become a school-mistress?"—to which she gently replied: "No, brother, but these poor children will probably remain altogether without instruction, if I do not teach them." Sometimes, it was one of those that ruled the house that surprised the ardent teacher, and then both she and her eager little pupils were peremptorily dismissed from the room, in which they were assembled.

CHAPTER SECOND.

MARGARET'S VOCATION. HER RECEPTION AND PROFESSION AT THE VISITATION.

MEANWHILE, Margaret's soul was a prey to fierce interior struggles, which all her exterior good works, her austerities, and even her prayers, seemed power-

less to allay. For a long time, her patient God had been pleading with her young heart, pursuing her without truce, urging her to yield to the sweet attractions of His grace, which was drawing her to the cloister. In her better moments Margaret promised more faithful correspondence to this grace, but weeks and months passed on, while her family ties, especially her tenderness for her mother, seemed ever to tighten the bonds of earth. She was now eighteen years old, beautiful and attractive, and received many advantageous offers of marriage, which her family urged her to accept. Her mother, with many tears, besought her daughter to take the step, which alone could free her from the thraldom under which she groaned.

Margaret began to mingle with the world, to dress to please it, and to give herself up to its deceitful pleasures. Our Lord, on His side, pleaded, warned, reproached and threatened; He even deigned to present Himself to her, as He was when Pilate said: "Behold the Man," or again, as loaded with His cross. One evening, when Margaret had retired to her room, and was taking off the dress, which she had worn with some little satisfaction during the

day, the Son of God appeared to her in the state in which He was after His cruel scourging, His sacred body bruised, torn, bleeding. He told her that it was her vanity which had reduced Him to this state; that by her irresolution she was losing time, of which He should demand a rigorous account at her death, and that she was betraying Him by her infidelity. He compared her ingratitude with all the proofs of love He had given her, in order to induce her to make herself in all things agreeable to Him. These reproaches threw Margaret into a state of inexpressible grief, she wept bitterly and seemed about to yield, but the inward strife recommenced, her hesitations were greater than ever. Our blessed Lord made, as it were, a last effort to triumph over this chosen soul, who, one day, after Holy Communion, allowed Him to make her the conquest of His love, by these words: "If you remain faithful to Me and desire to follow Me, I will teach you to know Me, and I will manifest Myself to you."

From that moment, Margaret resolved to die rather than change, and clung to her Crucifix as her only teacher. In this sacred school of divine love,

she strengthened her soul for the last struggle with a world which had so nearly enslaved her by its charms. When almost crushed with anguish, or sinking beneath her burden, she learned to turn for comfort to Him "who has borne our sorrows and healed our infirmities;" and casting herself at the foot of the cross, Margaret would say: "O sweet Saviour, how happy should I be, if Thou wouldst imprint in me the likeness of Thy sufferings!" and our gracious Lord replied: "This is what I intend to do, provided you do not resist Me and do your part." The extraordinary love of suffering, which henceforth distinguishes Margaret, suffices to attest the sanctity of her pure and holy soul.

During the long years of struggle between nature and grace this fervent girl had been endeavoring to reproduce in herself sufferings similar to those of our Saviour, wounded with love for man, and her austerities were such that the sturdiest courage shrinks from the mere mention of them. Sustained by the victorious grace, which had been her strength in her most fearful struggles, she did not now recoil from the last trials that must precede her final adieu to home and friends.

It was our Blessed Mother herself who consoled her child during this period of her probation, and who said to her lovingly : "Fear nothing ; you will be my true daughter, and I shall ever be your good Mother." Our Lady even assured Margaret that, notwithstanding opposition and difficulty, she would one day be a religious in an order consecrated to her. The Ursuline Convent at Mâcon had been proposed to her, and later the Visitation of Mâcon and Charolles, but she felt that her good Master had not marked her place in any of these. As soon, however, as Paray was named, her heart was filled with joy, and she at once consented to ask her admission into that convent. Her brother Chrysostom went with her to Paray, and when they entered the parlor of the Visitation, Margaret distinctly heard the words : "It is here I want you to be." She told her brother that he must arrange and conclude everything, as she would never go elsewhere. Joy shone upon her countenance, so that the religious said laughingly : "Just see her ! she looks like a religious indeed," and she herself says : "I wore more vain adornments than I had ever done, and was also gayer, because of the interior joy that

I felt at seeing myself about to be consecrated entirely to my Sovereign Good."

Margaret returned to Vérosvres, set her temporal affairs in order, and was ready to take leave of the world on the twentieth of June, 1671. Her farewells were heart-rending, never was there so much tenderness, desolation and grief on one side, so much firmness on the other. Her mother covered her with tears and kisses, but Margaret was unmoved, "like one of those large trees that the winds and storms attack on every side, but which remains unshaken, because its roots are deeply planted in the soil." But as God willed that no beauty of nature or grace should be wanting to this great sacrifice, hardly had she left her mother, than her soul became the prey of immense and indescribable anguish, so that it seemed to her as if it were about to leave her body, but she pursued her way, and made her definitive entrance into that convent, which she loved to call her "dear Paray." Margaret was then in her twenty-fourth year.

When about to enter the enclosure, she was again assailed by a violent interior conflict, but our Lord was waiting to inundate her soul with consolation,

and the moment she crossed the threshold of the house of the Lord, her trouble ceased. It was manifested to her that her Beloved had removed "the sackcloth of her captivity and clothed her with the robe of gladness;" by aid of His triumphant grace, she now belonged to Him forever.

The convent of Paray-le-Monial had been founded on September fourth, 1626, by a colony from the Monastery of Lyons. On Margaret's entrance in 1671, it was governed by the venerated Mother Marguerite-Hiéronyme Hersant, professed of the first house of Paris. The Mistress of the Novices was the now venerable Sister Anne Frances Thouvant, the first of the young girls of Paray to take the veil, in 1627. Both these Sisters, who were noted alike for their sanctity and experience, gave Margaret a tender and maternal welcome, though they little suspected the treasure with which God was enriching their humble convent. Yet, soon perceiving that she was a soul favored by Heaven, they dealt out to her with unsparing hand the food of the saints, trials and contradictions. The first word addressed to Margaret, the day after her entrance, by the venerable Sister Anne Frances Thouvant will

ever remain celebrated. The postulant, sincerely believing that she knew nothing about prayer, besought her mistress to teach her that sacred science. Sister Anne Frances replied: "Go—place yourself before God, like canvas before a painter!"—words brief but full, in which Margaret found the secret of prayer. She went at once to prostrate herself at our Lord's feet, in obedience to her mistress, and her Sovereign Master made known to her that her soul was the canvas, on which He desired to paint the features of His suffering life, but that first He must purify it from every stain, from every affection to earthly things, from love of self and of creatures, to which she was still greatly inclined.

A little more than two months were passed in strenuous efforts to attain the perfection of the Institute and become in the full sense of the word, a "*Holy Mary*," as the Sisters were styled; at the end of this time, the nuns gave her the holy Habit, on the feast of Saint Louis, August twenty-fifth, 1671, and added Mary to her name of Margaret. On that day, our Lord showed Himself to her as the true Lover of her soul, as the One she had chosen above

all, as the One who would indemnify her for all she had left for Him, making her taste what is sweetest in the sweetness of His love, so that this privileged soul asked herself: "Shall I then never be able to suffer for Him whom I love so much?" But she soon learned that, in the spiritual life, one may suffer and rejoice, and the sharpest pain is often accompanied by holiest consolation; this reassured her and prepared her for the severe reproofs that her great consolations in prayer sometimes brought upon her. Sister Anne Frances thought it her duty to inform the novice that her extraordinary ways were not in accordance with the humble spirit of the Visitation, and that if she did not change, she could not be admitted to Profession. To aid her to overcome her state of absorption, Sister Margaret Mary was given as aid to the Infirmarian, who had instructions to keep her constantly employed, so that, during the time of prayer, she was sent to sweep the corridors and cells, or weed the garden. Humbly and cheerfully, the fervent novice discharged these laborious duties, having ever before her eyes the invisible Object of her love. "She contemplated Him, she listened to Him, she lived

under the continual charm of His Presence and sang, as she worked:

The more they contradict my love,
The more that love inflames.
By day, by night, they torture me,
But cannot break my chains.
Closer does He my heart enchain
The more I suffer pain.

Meanwhile, Sister Margaret Mary's year of probation came to an end, and she had not the happiness of making her holy Vows, as the Sisters feared that, perhaps, she was not intended to live out her life at the Visitation. She poured out her grief to our Lord, saying: "Alas! my Lord, wilt *Thou* be the cause of my being sent away?" to which the gracious Lord replied: "Tell your Superior that she has nothing to fear in receiving you; that I will answer for you and be your security." Mother Mary Frances de Saumaise, who governed the Community in 1672, ordered the novice to ask our Lord, as a proof of the fidelity of His promises, to render her useful, and He vouchsafed to do so, adding that it would be in a manner known only to Himself. After three months' hesitation and reflection, the

Sisters at last fixed Sister Margaret Mary's Profession for the sixth of November.

During her preparatory retreat a trifling incident proved how far she carried the simplicity of obedience. The novices had received an injunction to see that an ass and its foal, which had been purchased for the use of a sick Sister, did not stray into the kitchen garden. Margaret Mary, not feeling that the exercises of the retreat dispensed her from this duty, spent all her time running after these animals, who were strongly tempted by the garden herbs. She was doing what God wished her to do, what more could she desire? The reward soon came: her gracious Lord appeared to her in a little cluster of hazel-nut trees and communicated to her an intimate knowledge of the mysteries of His holy Passion and Death. Margaret Mary always called this hallowed spot her "place of grace."

But meagre details are given us of Margaret Mary's Profession, but we seem to know perfectly the sentiments that filled her heart, the graces with which she was inundated. The Lord appeared to her and said: "Up to this time, I have been your Betrothed. I shall henceforth be your Spouse," and Margaret

Mary, touched to the depths of her soul, wrote with her blood a total consecration of herself to her Beloved. Never, perhaps, did a novice sing with greater exultation the words of the ceremonial: "Here is my rest and here will I abide forever.

CHAPTER THIRD.

SPECIAL FAVORS. FIRST REVELATION OF THE SACRED HEART.

"THE year following the Profession of Sister Margaret Mary resembled the first days of spring, when nature suddenly breaks forth perfumed and blossomed:" from the day of her solemn Vows, so rapid was her increase in virtue, that the whole Community looked on in wondering admiration. The newly professed was never to swerve from the line of conduct that, under the guidance of her Sovereign Master, she traced out for herself:

"All in God and nothing in self!
All to God and nothing to self!
All for God and nothing for self!"

Our Lord had said to her: "Behold the Wound

of My Side, wherein you are to make your abode, both now and forever." Within this sacred Abode, Margaret Mary daily concealed herself more and more, until the hour when, at the will of the Master, she should come forth to instruct other souls in the salutary science of dwelling in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

If Saint Francis of Sales says that God outlines His saints on Mount Thabor, but perfects them on Calvary, it was our Lord Himself who taught Margaret Mary their meaning. Not long after her profession, He placed before her eyes, a large cross, covered with flowers, assuring her that gradually these flowers would disappear, until there remained naught but the thorns hidden beneath. This announcement from the lips of Eternal Truth filled her heart with gladness, for she had feared never to have sufferings enough to satisfy the burning thirst for them that gave her no rest by night or by day. "I cannot find any sweeter rest," she says, "than to feel my whole being drowned in humiliations, contempt, and contradictions," and her actions corresponded to her words, for, to use the expression of one of her Superiors, Margaret Mary would

have martyrized her body, with vigils, disciplines, and mortifications.

Margaret Mary's spirit of faith caused her to behold God equally present everywhere, so that she performed carefully the duties assigned her in the various offices of the convent, but her favorite occupation was singing His praises at holy office Many times, however, was she deprived of this consolation, on account of loss of voice, though she was not the less united to Him, by the profound annihilation, with which, from the depth of her lowliness she, by her loving silence, adored His Supreme Being. On one of these occasions when, during Matins, Margaret Mary was meditating with deep recollection on the words of the *Te Deum*, then being sung by the choir, suddenly a heavenly light of indescribable brilliancy rested upon her folded arms, in the form of a little child. A flood of sweetness filled her soul, but fearing the wiles of the evil one, she said: "If it be Thou, O my God, enable me to sing Thy praises." At once, her voice returned, and fervently indeed she pursued with her Sisters the chant of the *Te Deum*, undeterred and not diverted by the caresses lavished on her by

the divine Babe. Our blessed Lord was so pleased with this, that He said to her: "I willed to test your motive in singing My praises. Had you been for a moment less attentive, I should have retired." Another time, it was our Blessed Mother who appeared, and placing the Infant Jesus in the arms of the holy nun, said: "Behold Him, who will teach you what you are to do."

Margaret Mary's whole life was but a long and almost unbroken succession of such supernatural favors, so that the Sisters, inspired with enthusiastic admiration, asked: "What can it be? What passes between God and this soul, during those long hours of ecstasy? Is it illusion? Or, is God acting in her? and for what end?" Even before what are called the *great Revelations*, her loving Saviour had, by many interior communications, revealed to her His Sacred Heart, but now He was about to open it to her, to discover to her the wonders of His love, and the inexplicable secrets of that adorable Heart. On the twenty-seventh of December, 1673, when Margaret Mary was praying before the Blessed Sacrament, her Lord appeared, and made her repose for a long time on His sacred Breast. He said to

her: "My divine Heart is so passionately in love with men, that It can no longer contain within Itself the flames of its burning charity; It must pour them out by your means." Formerly, this Heart had shown Itself in cloisters, to chosen souls, now It would manifest Itself to the multitude in order to melt the icy coldness of Christian hearts. "Such was the meaning of the first apparition, in which Margaret Mary had learned two things: the first, that God could not contain within His Heart the secrets of His love; the second, that He would make use of her, to reveal them to the world."

Six months of peace, recollection, silence, and steady progress in humility and the love of God, followed this first revelation. It was in this interval, that once, when the Sisters were all working together, picking hemp, Margaret Mary retired, as was her wont, into a little court near the Blessed Sacrament. The adorable Heart of her Jesus, more brilliant than the sun, was present to her, in the midst of flames, surrounded by Seraphim, who sang with ravishing melody:

"Love triumphs, Love rejoices;
The Love of the Sacred Heart exults with joy."

These Blessed Spirits invited Margaret Mary to unite with them in praising the amiable Heart, but she dared not. Then they told her that they had come to associate themselves with her in rendering It a continual homage of love, adoration and praise and, at the same time, they wrote this association in the Sacred Heart in letters of gold and ineffaceable characters of love. Henceforth, in praying to the Angels, she could no longer mention them but as her "associates."

Such visions were frequently vouchsafed to Margaret Mary and, every First Friday of the month, the Sacred Heart was represented to her as a brilliant light, whose rays fell on her heart and inflamed it with a fire so ardent, that it seemed as if about to be reduced to ashes. "Once," she said, "this loving Heart was shown to me, transpierced and torn with blows." Another time, "pierced with light, like a fathomless abyss, opened by an immeasurable arrow." Again Margaret Mary tells us: "Generally, the thorns of the crown surrounded the Heart so closely and pressed It so violently, that it was wounded in every part and the blood flowed in streams," exemplifying the words of the Imitation: "Without sorrow, there is no living in love."

CHAPTER FOURTH.

SECOND AND THIRD REVELATIONS. FATHER DE LA COLOMBIÈRE.

AFTER having, in the first revelation, shown the true principle of the new devotion, a love whose flames He could no longer confine in His Heart, Jesus, in the second apparition, revealed its character, expiation for the crimes of the world, consolation for His forsaken Heart. This took place in the year 1674, probably on the Friday in the octave of Corpus Christi, but it is the only one of which we have not the exact date. Margaret Mary herself will relate it: "Once, when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed . . . my sweet Master presented Himself to me. He was brilliant with glory; His Five Wounds shone like five suns. Flames darted forth from all parts of His sacred humanity, but especially from His adorable Breast, which resembled a furnace and which, opening, displayed to me His loving and amiable Heart, the living Source of these flames." He complained in heartrending accents of the ingratitude of mankind,

telling her that He felt their coldness more than all He suffered in His Passion, "because," He added, "if they made Me some return, I should esteem little all I have done for them. . . . Do you, at least, console and rejoice Me, by supplying as much as you can for their ingratitude." Margaret Mary excused herself on the plea of incapacity, but Jesus bade her "Fear not," and promised to supply all that was wanting to her. Then, to use her own words: "The divine Heart being opened, there came forth a flame so ardent, that I thought I should be consumed."

The Lord now asked two things of her: the first, to communicate every First Friday of the month, no matter what mortification or humiliation it might cause her; the second, to rise between eleven o'clock and midnight, on the night between Thursday and Friday, of every week, and to prostrate for an hour with her face to the ground, in expiation of the sins of men, and to console His Heart for the general desertion, to which the weakness of the Apostles in the Garden of Olives had been only a slight prelude. Such was the origin of the devotion, known as the "Holy Hour." Margaret Mary related this remark-

able favor to her Superior, Mother Marie-Françoise de Saumaise who, whether she believed her or not, or feigned not to believe her, humbled her as deeply as she could, which caused the fervent Sister "inconceivable joy."

In the same year, 1674, on the feast of Saint John the Evangelist, December twenty-seventh, the blessed Sister had another vision almost similar to that of 1673. She was allowed the ineffable happiness of reclining on the Breast of her divine Master, as the beloved disciple had done at the Last Supper. She saw the Heart of Jesus upon a throne of fire and flames, more dazzling than the sun and transparent as crystal; it was encircled by a crown of thorns and surmounted by a cross, while the Wound was distinctly visible. Our Lord revealed to His servant that these instruments of the Passion signified the immense love of His Heart for men, and that the cross had been implanted in this Heart from the first moment of the Incarnation. He assured her that He took singular pleasure in being honored under the figure of this Heart of flesh, and that wherever this image should be exposed for special veneration, it would draw down all kinds of blessings.

Her adorable Master ended this sublime colloquy with His humble lover by the following words: "I have a burning thirst to be honored and loved by men in the Blessed Sacrament, and I find hardly any one, who strives, according to My desire, to allay this thirst by making Me some return of love."

Meanwhile, Superiors became more and more embarrassed about the "extraordinary ways" of the young Sister, and conferences with learned people led to the conclusion that, in her case, there was much imagination, a little natural temperament and, perhaps, some illusion of the evil spirit. The poor Sister knew not which way to turn, when, one day, pouring out her fears and anxieties to her Lord, He promised soon to send to Paray one of His faithful servants to reassure her and lead her in the way He would trace out for her. Events proved that this faithful servant was Father Claude de la Colombière, who came in time for the greatest perplexities, almost on the eve of the third, last and most important of the great revelations.

During the octave of Corpus Christi, June sixteenth, 1675, Margaret Mary was on her knees be-

fore the choir grate, her eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, when our Lord appeared upon the Altar, disclosed to her His Heart, and said: "Behold this Heart which has so loved men, that It has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming Itself, in order to testify Its love. In return I receive from the greater part nothing but ingratitude, by their irreverence and sacrilege, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in the Sacrament of love. But what I feel still more is that they are hearts consecrated to Me, that treat Me thus. On this account, I ask you that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special feast to honor My Heart, by communicating on that day and making reparation to It, by a solemn act, to repair the indignities which It has received during the time It has remained exposed upon My altars. I also promise you that My Heart shall expand Itself to shed in abundance the influence of Its divine love upon those who shall render It this honor, or procure its being rendered."

Astonished at such a mission, but one word escaped Margaret Mary: "Lord, how can I?" To this the Lord made answer: "Address yourself to

My servant, Father de la Colombière, who has been sent expressly for the accomplishment of this design and tell him from Me to do what he can to establish this devotion and give this pleasure to My divine Heart."

Father de la Colombière had no difficulty in reassuring Margaret Mary's Superiors in regard to the truth of her visions and revelations, and confirmed her in the mysterious ways by which the Lord was leading her. Thus fortified, she solemnly consecrated herself to the divine Heart of Jesus, as did also Father de la Colombière, on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, which fell that year, 1675, on the twenty-first of June. The great work was inaugurated: the first conquests of the Heart of Jesus were the holy priest and the humble religious who, henceforth, neglected no opportunity of working for the accomplishment of the divine purposes of love. The adorable Master continued to lavish His choicest favors on Margaret Mary's soul, and on one occasion He said to her: "I constitute you heiress of My Heart and all Its treasures for time and eternity, permitting you to employ them as you will; and I promise you that you shall never fail to receive as-

sistance, till My Heart shall be wanting in power. You shall be forever Its beloved disciple."

But the devotion to the Sacred Heart was still hidden in the silence and solitude of the cloister, and before it could cross the threshold and be revealed to the entire world, Margaret Mary must drink still more deeply of the chalice of trial and contradiction.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

TRIALS. DEATH OF FATHER DE LA COLOMBIÈRE. THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART IN THE NOVICIATE. TRIUMPH IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE hour was fast approaching when she who had been chosen to make known to the world the ineffable mysteries of the Heart of Jesus, was to learn them herself by painful experience. The cross that Margaret Mary had so long asked for, was to be worthy of Him who had promised it and of her who had so eagerly desired it.

Shortly after the last sublime revelation, her enlightened director, Father de la Colombière, was sent

in haste to England, to occupy an important post at court, leaving the humble religious alone to face her perilous mission. Her fears were calmed by an interior voice which seemed to say to her: "Does not God suffice for you?"

Soon the Heart of Jesus, crowned with thorns and pierced with a lance, impressed upon her body Its own living image. One morning, when she was drawing water from the well in the middle of the courtyard, the long iron handle that served to raise the bucket, swung violently round and struck Margaret Mary on the face with such force, that it broke away a portion of her gums with several teeth. She was lifted up, bruised and bleeding, but smiling, and the only notice she took of the accident was to ask one of the pupils, whose mistress she then was, to cut off a piece of flesh, which remained attached by one end. The child, horrified at seeing the Sister in such a state, refused to touch it, so Margaret Mary quietly took a pair of scissors and severed it herself. The terrible pain she suffered threw light upon a vision she had had a short time before of the Sacred Heart, resplendent as the sun and, in the centre of the glory, our Lord, holding a crown of

thorns in His Hand. He laid the crown on Margaret Mary's head, telling her it was a sign of the one that would soon be given her to render her conformable to Him. Courageously and joyously, she endured this conformity with her thorn-crowned Spouse, as also a mysterious pain in her side, which seemed to consume and burn her alive and increased on the First Friday of every month. Besides this, Jesus communicated to the fervent religious something of the thirst that He endured in His agony and appeared to her with a cross in His Hand, telling her to receive it and plant it in her heart. From that day, Margaret Mary became a compound of suffering that made her an object of pity, a living copy of the wounded Heart of Jesus. "Miracles were of constant recurrence in her life and repeatedly our Lord either cured her, or increased her sufferings, according to the commands she received from her Superiors to ask for health, or again for sickness, as proofs of the divine character of her revelations."

A new Superioress, Mother Péronne-Rosalie Greyfié, of Annecy, having replaced Mother Marie Françoise de Saumaise, seemed to have been delegated for no other end, than by the severity and

courage of her examination, to throw splendor on Margaret Mary's virtue and the supernatural character of her mission. Margaret Mary loved this good Mother with deep affection, always rendered greater by gratitude for the trials she received. So act the Saints!

Margaret Mary was not content with appeasing the anger of God towards the living, but also endeavored to satisfy by her sufferings the justice of God in regard to the poor souls in Purgatory. She was often surrounded by her "good suffering friends," as she used to call them, and many secrets of the other world were revealed to her by these prisoners of divine Justice. The future also was not hidden from her; and when inspired by the Holy Spirit, she often foretold coming events, as she did in regard to Father de la Colombière's death.

After a few years' absence in England, he had returned home in a dying condition; and though, at first, Paray seemed to restore to him a little strength, he grew weaker every day, so that soon his life was not much more than a breath. His Superiors, on the advice of the physicians, consented to his going to his brother's home in Dauphiny. Upon hearing of

his intended departure, Margaret Mary sent him the following words in writing: "He has told me that He desires the sacrifice of your life, here." Upon this, the Father remained at Paray, and ended his holy life some days later, on the fifteenth of February, 1682. A few hours after his death, which God had revealed to her, He also made known to her the glory that His servant now enjoyed in Heaven, which he had entered, she said, "through the goodness and mercy of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ," and where he was in a condition to pray for those on earth.

"The greater progress Margaret Mary made in sanctity, so much the more furiously was she assailed by the devil, who was enraged at not having been able to draw this soul under his infernal yoke. For a long time he had directed all his efforts against her body, and would often make her fall and break what she was carrying. One day, his malice went so far as to throw her from the top to the bottom of the stairs. Margaret Mary, however, arose without the slightest injury, for, not only had she been protected by her Guardian Angel, but by a second angel also, who had been chosen by our Lord from

among the Seraphim, to keep special watch over His blessed servant. She constantly enjoyed the sensible presence of this heavenly protector and conversed familiarly with him."

The hour had now come, when the apostolate of the Sacred Heart was to begin in real earnest, and the heavenly spark, which was to inflame the whole world, to be enkindled; the fervent noviciate of Paray-le-Monial was to witness the first outburst of its sacred flames. Mother Marie-Christine Melin, yielding to the humble request of many of the Sisters, had named Margaret Mary the Mistress of the Novices, at the New Year, 1685. These novices were worthy to have a saint for their Mistress, and hardly had Margaret Mary entered on her charge when, according to the expression of the old memoirs, she "enkindled the fire of divine love in all those well-disposed hearts." On the approach of her feast, July twentieth, 1685, Margaret Mary, noticing the preparations of the novices for it, begged that all the testimonies of affection intended for her, should be offered to the Heart of Jesus. The novices joyfully acceded to the wishes of their saintly Mistress. A little oratory was promptly prepared, in

which was erected an altar, on which was placed a little pen-and-ink picture of the Sacred Heart from the Novitiate and the whole day was spent by this band of chosen souls in praising and blessing the meek and humble Heart of Jesus. Before this modest shrine, Margaret Mary, with the ardor of a seraph, consecrated herself to the Sacred Heart, as did also each of the novices in turn, repeating the words of the formula she had used.

This was only the beginning, for, one year later, the whole Community rendered to the Sacred Heart of Jesus its homage of love and adoration, at the invitation of the venerated Sister Marie Madeleine des Escures, a perfect model of exactitude to religious observance, who up to that period had made most opposition to the "new" devotion as contrary, in her opinion, to the Constitutions of the Visitation. On entering the choir on the morning of the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, the Sisters perceived a little altar covered with tapestry, on which was exposed, in the midst of flowers and blessed tapers, a picture of the Sacred Heart. A card, signed by Sister Marie Madeleine, invited the Sisters to consecrate themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The young and the old prostrated like two choirs of Angels. In the fervor of their enthusiasm all agreed on the erection of a chapel in the convent garden, in which to expose a beautiful large picture of the Sacred Heart. In the meantime, the better to repair what she termed "her fault," Sister Marie Madeleine asked to be allowed to take care of the little oratory, consecrated by the Noviciate to the Heart of Jesus, and performed her duty so well that Margaret Mary could write of this little oratory: "It is a little gem, she bestows so much care upon it."

Before the end of that memorable year, 1686, Margaret Mary bound herself still closer to the Heart of her adorable Master, by the vow to do always whatever she considered most perfect. It was about this time also that He bestowed on her a fresh token of His watchful love, in giving her as guide and special protector the seraphic Saint Francis of Assisi. Who better than this angel in human form could teach the passionate lover of suffering how to give to her soul the final traits of resemblance with her crucified Spouse?

CHAPTER SIXTH.

VISION OF JULY 2, 1688. LAST GRAND REVELATION. MARGARET MARY'S HOLY DEATH.

FROM the day of the consecration of the Community of Paray to the divine Heart, this great and tender devotion to infinite love began its triumphal march, and Margaret Mary reaped in joy and gratitude all that she had "sown in tears," amid sorrow and tribulation. On the feast of the Visitation, 1688, she was again favored with a remarkable vision, in which she beheld the Sacred Heart, with our Lady on one side, and, on the other, Saint Francis of Sales and Father de la Colombière. The Blessed Virgin made known to her that God had created the Order of the Visitation, which he looks upon and loves as "His Benjamin," to preserve the precious deposit of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and that it may be a recollected and fervent sanctuary, in which every soul shall enrich itself with this inexhaustible Treasure, though it is reserved to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus to make known Its utility and value, that

all may profit by receiving It with gratitude due to so great a benefit.

On September seventh of this same year, took place, with extraordinary solemnity, the dedication of the little chapel, projected two years before. During the two or three hours that the ceremony lasted, Margaret Mary knelt in the chapel, "immovable as a statue," so recollected in God that no one dared speak to her, though the throng surrounded her on all sides. On beholding the triumph of the Sacred Heart, she must have cried out, as she wrote to Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié: "Now I shall die content, since the Heart of my Saviour begins to be known and adored." The new sanctuary became a place of pilgrimage for the Sisters of the Community, who on the First Fridays of the month, sang the Litany of the Sacred Heart, as they went thither in procession, and there renewed their acts of reparation and consecration. Nor was the piety of the people to be checked by any obstacle, and the chapel being within the enclosure of the monastery, many made the tour of the garden, and peasants were seen kneeling outside, leaning against the walls, their gaze turned towards that first temple, in which was

publicly adored the Heart of Jesus. It is a singular coincidence that this first little chapel of the Sacred Heart, locked by the religious, when driven away from their Monastery by the Revolution, was not entered during the whole period of their absence. On their return, they found everything as they had left it, as if our Lord wished to preserve from sacrilegious contact the sanctuary of His adorable Heart.

In reading the Letters of Blessed Margaret Mary, we cannot but realize the ardor with which she propagated this most efficacious devotion, by means of pictures, which she spared no pains to have as perfect as possible. Mother Marie Françoise de Saumaise, then at Dijon, ably seconded the zeal of her former daughter, as did also Mother Péronne Rosalie Greyfié, who, wishing to make Margaret Mary a present that would touch her heart, sent her a copy of a beautiful oil painting, by a skilful artist. This was highly prized by the servant of God, and served as a model for the large picture in the garden chapel at Paray. When the ardent Sister saw it, she could not restrain her transports of joy, "a thousand times greater," she said, than if she had been put in possession of all the treasures of earth. Unfortunately,

this little relic was lost during the Revolution. Margaret Mary's heart was also filled with consolation as, by means of zealous priests and other pious souls, the Sacred Heart of her Saviour became ever better known and more ardently loved. The progress of the devotion was to her a foretaste of Heaven, and she continually repeated : "The Sacred Heart will reign, in spite of Satan and his accomplices! These words transport me with joy, and are my only consolation."

Before completing her earthly course, the apostle of the Sacred Heart had one more mission to fulfil, though nothing seems to have prepared her for the grand revelation about to be made. In the months of June and August, 1689, our Lord bade her make known to the "Eldest Son" of His Heart, as He designated the King of France, Louis the Fourteenth, that He desired to establish His kingdom in the heart of that monarch, to reign in his palace, to be emblazoned on his standards, to be engraven on his arms, in order to render him victorious over all his enemies. Further, our Lord wished to have erected an edifice in which should be an image of His divine Heart, to receive the consecration and

homage of the King and all the court. Margaret Mary did her utmost to convey this message to Louis the Fourteenth. Might it be that her messengers were unfaithful in transmitting this order? Might it be that Louis the Fourteenth's soul would not be sufficiently humble to comprehend the Christian grandeur of such a thought? Be it as it may, no attention was paid to the heavenly warning; Margaret Mary's last admonitions were without avail; *she* was nearing her death.

Two centuries later, in 1889, France, remembering the year 1689 and the remedy refused; 1789 and the chastisement inflicted, made tardy reparation, by solemnly consecrating herself to the Sacred Heart, at the express desire of the King of kings, and raised a temple in honor of this divine Heart at Montmartre, on the very site where her first martyrs had in shedding their blood, bestowed upon her the priceless gift of faith.

When Margaret Mary finished this first work, she also ended a second, the moulding of her soul to the image of the Sacred Heart. The sacrifice was nearing its consummation. To the criticisms, the discussions, of which she had been the object, succeeded

a sort of deep and discreet enthusiasm. "The community, in opposing her so persistently, had been but the blind instrument of God in the sanctification of this heroic soul, whose extraordinary graces might well have kept minds in suspense, but her humility triumphed at last over all prejudices." There was in her countenance something angelic, something ineffably pure; her eyes were so clear, her gaze so penetrating, that one might have been embarrassed under her holy glance, had it not been tempered by extreme sweetness and modesty. By a word, a glance, a sweet and delicate allusion, the holy Sister frequently revealed to others that she knew their interior dispositions. The gift of miracles was also hers, and a good domestic Sister especially experienced the effects of it. Having wounded her leg with an axe, the Sister-novice feared she might be sent away, and concealed the accident, but the wound increased and, like the poor woman of the Gospel, she said to herself: "*If I shall but touch her garment I shall be healed.*" Following out her good thought, she touched her wounded limb to the hem of Margaret Mary's habit, and was, in a short time, completely cured.

In 1690, the new Superioress of the Sisters of Paray, noticing that Margaret Mary, now the Sister Assistant, was failing in health, forbade her all austerities, which was a hard trial for this soul devoured by such an insatiable thirst for suffering. Yet she humbly obeyed, saying: "Our good Mother takes too much care of me." Margaret Mary now spoke incessantly of her approaching death. "I shall not live much longer," she said, "for I have nothing to suffer;" or, "I shall certainly die this year, because I suffer no longer." Again,—"I shall assuredly die this year, in order not to prevent the great fruits that my divine Saviour expects to reap from a *book of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*," words that very much surprised Father Croiset, S. J., who was working at this book, but had not yet spoken of it to any one. The thought of being an obstacle to the glory of the Sacred Heart increased Margaret Mary's desire for Heaven, and henceforth she lived only for love, her great motto being: "Love, suffer through love, and be silent. This is the secret of the lovers of the Beloved." From her lips and pen continually came such words as these: "Ask the Sacred Heart, I beseech you, to grant me the grace to die

with Him upon the cross, poor, unknown, despised, forgotten by all creatures, overwhelmed with all kinds of suffering, according to His choice and desire and not mine."

On July twenty-second, the feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, Margaret Mary, hearing more distinctly the call of the Bridegroom, began, in preparation for death, a retreat of forty days. When she was attacked by her last illness, nine days before her death, she replied to a Sister, who asked her if she could enter retreat: "Yes, but it will be the *great* retreat." The physician saw nothing serious in her indisposition, and said that she would not die of it, but Margaret Mary smiled incredulously. Her illness was accompanied by interior pains of which no one knew the cause, but also by ineffable consolations. On October sixteenth, the eve of her death, she earnestly implored the grace of Holy Viaticum, which, being refused, as her state did not seem to warrant it, she obtained the favor of Holy Communion which, as she told one of the Sisters, she received as Viaticum, as the end was near. Our gracious Saviour Himself was her support in the last struggle, and allowed His faithful servant to realize

fully the truth of the words she had written so long before: "How sweet it is to die, after having had a constant devotion to the Heart of Him, who is to be our Judge."

The great change came suddenly toward seven o'clock in the evening of October seventeenth, 1690. The priest entered and began the ceremony of Extreme Unction and, at the anointing of the fourth sense, Margaret Mary pronounced the Holy Name of Jesus, as her soul left this land of exile, to contemplate forever the glories of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which she had so tenderly loved and so devotedly served. As she had foretold, she expired in the arms of two of her former novices, Sister Péronne Rosalie de Farges and Sister Françoise Rosalie Verchère. She was aged forty-three years, two months and four days.

But one cry was now heard, "The Saint is dead!" which passing beyond the convent grates, the whole town of Paray was soon astir. Even little children went through the streets, crying: "The saint of the Holy Mary's is dead!" The saintly nun was buried under one of the choir flags near the spot on which she was kneeling when the Lord appeared to her.

Many miraculous favors were obtained through her intercession, and gradually Margaret Mary came forth from obscurity, rising slowly in glory, "leaning upon her Beloved." Preliminary enquiries to the introduction of the Cause at Rome were instituted in 1715, through the zeal of Monseigneur Languet, then Vicar General of Autun, afterwards Bishop of Soissons, and, finally, Archbishop of Sens. In 1729, he gave to the public the Life of Margaret Mary, which, while arousing the resentment of the Jansenists, incited in the hearts of the faithful greater love of the divine Heart. The eighteenth century closed without Margaret Mary's being declared *Venerable*, for the process of Beatification was suspended until after the revolution, which, like an impious whirlwind, swept over France, overthrowing altars and suppressing convents. Among the others, that of Paray was closed, and the religious driven out, until June sixteenth, 1823, when, with charitable assistance, the Sisters regained their old home. God blessed their renewed endeavors for the canonization of their holy Sister, and on March thirtieth, 1824, the servant of God received the title of *Venerable*. On September eighteenth, 1864, Pius the Ninth, of

glorious memory, made at Rome the solemn proclamation of decree of Beatification.

The relics of "Blessed" Margaret Mary remained at Paray-le-Monial all through the stormy period of the Revolution, the magistrates having interfered with the Sisters' carrying away with them the precious remains. The mayor went so far as to have the city seals affixed to the wooden casket and set a guard around it. The holy relics now rest in a splendid casket beneath the white marble altar of the convent church, where our Lord so many times appeared to her. More than eighty lamps casting their radiant light upon this altar, burn day and night, in honor of the divine Master and His humble servant. Before this altar of the Apparitions, where every thing speaks to the soul, pilgrims love to pray and from it the countless graces and mercies of the Heart of Jesus flow out to the whole world, through the intercession of Blessed Margaret Mary.

National and local pilgrimages began in the year 1873, and have annually brought to this holy shrine throngs of devout souls to draw from the inexhaustible treasures of the Heart of Jesus. Here, all hearts are warmed, all beat in unison, for this ador-

able Heart darts Its rays upon them, to vivify and transfigure them, filling them with Its invincible force. Here, one realizes that it was for the Sacred Heart, God created Margaret Mary, and it was through the Sacred Heart, that He led her to the highest perfection. In the words of the decree of her Beatification, "her sanctity is resumed in that ardent love, with which she burned for the Heart of Jesus and that immense zeal which induced her to draw all hearts to render It love for love." Here, the Heart of Jesus triumphs over all obstacles and the wonderful increase of faith, piety, and purest love of God, verifies the truth of the words of our Lord to His humble servant: "I shall reign in spite of all My enemies, and I shall accomplish the design for which I have chosen you, notwithstanding the efforts of those who try to oppose it."

LIFE OF THE VENERABLE ANNE MADELEINE REMUZAT.

LIFE OF THE VENERABLE ANNE MADELEINE REMUZAT.

CHAPTER FIRST.

MARSEILLES.—THE REMUZATS.—BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

To the Christian reader, Marseilles seems to be a city especially favored by divine Providence. It was converted to Christianity a few years after the Ascension of our Lord and, here, Saint Mary Magdalen,

> "Baume's seraph of love, enraptured could tell
> Of visions celestial beyond human ken."

After an interval of nearly seventeen centuries, our Saviour gave Marseilles another proof of His love; the city of Saint Lazarus and Saint Mary Magdalen became the "city of the Sacred Heart of Jesus," a holy prerogative, which this ancient Catholic city claims as a title of glory, an anchor of hope and one of its most sacred and treasured traditions.

"The Spirit breatheth where It will," but in choosing Marseilles for the theatre of His mercy, God, as always in His infinite designs, proportioned the means to the end; in selecting it as the city of the Sacred Heart. He prepared the surest ways to extend even to distant lands, the knowledge, love and devotion to that Sacred Heart. At the period of which we write, Marseilles was one of the fairest and most prosperous cities of Southern France; her vessels traversed every known sea and her sails floated in every port of the commercial world. Thus was she brought into relations with the most distant lands; their wealth poured into her coffers, and and made her one of the richest and most influential cities of the seventeenth century. God made use of this power and influence to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart, We read in the Annals that in the Orient at Macao, a Confraternity in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus existed as early as 1709.

Madeleine Remuzat belonged to an old Catholic family, in which patriarchal manners were hereditary and the members of which held a high rank among the merchant princes of Marseilles. The first known ancestors of the Remuzats were natives of the little

town of Seyne, in the diocese of Embrun, from which two of them, James and Peter Remuzat, went to Marseilles, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, in order to devote themselves to maritime commerce. Her father was Hyacinth, son of James, who was in his day, one of the most considerable personages of the city, being especially noted for honor, probity, respect for high principles, and above all, for his lively, sincere and enlightened faith. Her mother was Anne Coustan, daughter of a former sheriff. It was in the Church of Notre-Dame des Accoules, only a few hours after her birth, that the child was regenerated in the holy waters of Baptism and received the name of Madeleine. We learn from a tradition, faithfully preserved, that, on this twenty-ninth day of November, 1696, a miraculous star appeared at Auriol, a small town not far from Marseilles, and was seen in broad daylight, above the house of La Glacière, the summer-residence of the Remuzats, doubtless a prophetic gleam of the heavenly light of devotion to the adorable Heart of Jesus, which through this humble Apostle was, one day, to shine in thousands of hearts.

The Lord who reserved to Himself the soul of this

child, lavished special graces on her, almost from her babyhood. Madeleine was often seen to join her tiny hands and fix her eyes on Heaven, while her infant lips uttered the words: "I want to be a nun." Then, as if she wished to confirm and make better known her intention of belonging to God alone, she constantly refused to receive any caresses but those of her parents. Already there seemed to be united in this child a strong inclination to piety, rare natural qualities, gifts of mind and heart, which were to develop and be perfected, under the influence of a firm, but gentle education, based upon the great principles of religion. Yet side by side with these precious gifts, and strangely in contrast with them, were excessive petulance, unusual vivacity and a sort of violence of character, which occasioned many childish quarrels with her brothers and sisters. She had a good heart, but she would heed no one, settle down to nothing; application was so unknown to her, that it was even feared that her education would suffer from it. At last, her vigilant, tender mother appealed to the mind and heart of Madeleine; the sensitive chord was touched. To please God first, then her mother, gave her courage to repress and

overcome these dangerous tendencies. This led the way to a second victory, when, a few years later, vanity and love of dress became a snare for the attractive child. Her early inclination for the religious life also grew with her growth and she was not more than six or seven years of age, when she begged to be allowed to enter a cloistered Monastery. At first Mr. and Mrs. Remuzat prudently refused this request, but at last, fearing to resist the Will of God, in regard to their beloved daughter, they endeavored to conciliate all interests, by placing her as a boarder in the second Monastery of the Visitation, where one of their relatives, Sister Madeleine Séraphine Martin, was then charged with the direction of the boarding school. The whole household deeply regretted the departure of the amiable child, who was dearly loved by all.

CHAPTER SECOND.

BOARDING SCHOOL.—FIRST COMMUNION.—CHOICE OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

MADELEINE'S smiling face was in strange contrast with the emotion of her parents, as they parted from

their treasure, but her long cherished desires were now realized and she made no effort to conceal her joy, at being at last within the walls of a Monastery. To this pious asylum, she brought an innocent soul, and a heart open to divine love, but also slight defects inherent to human weakness, the correction of which our Lord Himself took in hand. One day, Madeleine, yielding to self-will, secretly took possession of some balls of silk, of which she had no permission to make use, although they were hers. Reproved for her fault, she denied it twice and persisted in her falsehood. When the bell called the boarders to supper, she seized the occasion to escape further questioning and quickly ran away, but in going along a corridor, her eyes became fixed upon a picture, which she had frequently passed, without even noticing it. It represented our Lord receiving the kiss of Judas and beneath, was written: "He who wishes to betray me has only to tell a lie." Touched by remorse of conscience, the little girl took refuge in a tribune of the Church and besought her divine Master to forgive her her fault. Then the sweet Jesus appeared loaded with His Cross and letting fall upon her a glance full of sadness and goodness, He

said: "It is you, My daughter, who have placed me in this condition." At these words, Madeleine was transpierced with love and sorrow for her fault, and thought only of repairing it and doing penance for it. She was then only nine years old, but she never forgot her weakness and from that day, meditation on the sufferings of our Saviour became familiar to her and the feeling of the Presence of God almost habitual. As the time for Madeleine's First Communion approached, she prepared for it with lively faith and unusual ardor, spending before the Tabernacle all the time of which she could dispose and shedding abundant tears. When the hour came for her to present herself at the Banquet of the Angels, her deeply recollected demeanor and radiant face gave the beholder an idea of how intimately this First Communion had united this pure, young heart to the loving Heart of her sweet Saviour.

Our happy little Sulamite, formed by our Lord Himself tc the science of the Saints, made obedience her great law, and did not pardon herself a single failing on this point. Once, for instance, having forgotten to put in order a class-room, of which she had charge, and, awaking during the night, she

immediately arose to repair her omission and went alone, through long corridors, in spite of her natural fear in the dark, a fear increased that night by the death of a religious in the Monastery. Next to obedience, self-denial was Madeleine's favorite virtue; often too, she asked permission to perform penance, and was consoled for a refusal only by imposing on herself little privations at table, taking what was not to her taste, so naturally, that no one suspected her dislike, or giving to her companions, or to the sick poor, the dainties and early fruits that her good parents sent her.

While still very young, Madeleine felt the burning desire of all generous souls to love and serve God perfectly, but she felt her powerlessness; and if, on the one hand, the loving attractions of her divine Saviour drew her to Him, on the other, her weakness made her feel she could not reach Him. Soon, a sort of indescribable disquiet took possession of the pious child; she prayed, never ceasing to repeat: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" At last, after Holy Communion, on the second of July, feast of the Visitation of our Lady, she distinctly heard our Lord say. "I wish you to be faithful to

Me." Grace and a certain spiritual sweetness accompanied those short and simple words, she understood their mysterious meaning, and resolved to perform her duties so faithfully, as not to receive unprofitably a single inspiration of grace. Madeleine immediately declared implacable war against herself, and commenced to lead that heroic life, which was, in so short a time, to raise her to sanctity. One day, among others, contemplating her Saviour crowned with thorns, her loving heart burned with desire to suffer something for Him and seizing a long pin which fastened her hair she drove it into her head with such force that the blood flowed.

Madeleine was only twelve years old, and our Lord could thus count upon the fidelity of her love. Soon came the hour, which was to be foremost among the decisive and solemn hours of her life. The amiable child, was in prayer, pouring out her soul to her gracious Lord, when suddenly He appeared to her and, as if He wished to question her, He said : " My daughter, I am seeking a victim." At these words, a thrill passed through Madeleine, but convinced of her own unworthiness, she did not dare to consider herself as chosen by the Master. In the simplicity

of her heart, she recalled to memory the holiest persons that she knew, and named one whom she thought likely to fix God's choice. "*No*," answers the adorable Master, "*that is not the one I want.*" She ventured a second, then a third proposal, and to each, the divine voice replied : "*No, no, that is not the one I want.*" At last, when the humble child was reduced to silence, the Lord Jesus gave her to understand these words of eternal predilection : "My daughter, you are the one whom I choose for My victim." Joy, gratitude and love crowded into Madeleine's heart and threw her into a profound ecstasy, in which she remained for a long time. The divine dart had wounded her forever, henceforth the happy victim of the Heart of Jesus will live no longer except of the life of this adorable Heart, *Love and Immolation.*

Meanwhile, several months passed away, without bringing her the expected sufferings, the object of her longing desires. On the feast of Saint Teresa, as she besought our Lord not to delay to bestow on her a share of His Cross, she heard an interior voice saying : "*You shall be heard*," and, indeed, she was, in a most painful and unlooked for manner. In

an instant, on the feast of Saint Francis Xavier, the third of December, her soul became, as it were, shrouded in darkness and deprived of the sensible favors which, up to this time, had been lavished on her, the gift of tears, the sweet sense of the presence of God, enjoyment in prayer, all disappeared, to give place to mortal weariness, to countless fears and perplexities. Her life then appeared to her as a continual crime, and, in God, she saw only an irritated Judge, ready to punish her. To this anguish, temptation was added. The enemy had, indeed, made a good choice of the time to attack this child of thirteen, but Madeleine's good Angel watched over her. He inspired her to meet these furious assaults with the ever victorious arms of prayer and obedience, and not only did she thus escape all the snares of hell, but her courage increased and her virtue grew stronger in the struggle. The Lord *had truly heard her*, and to conform to His designs of love, she ran rather than walked, in the path of sacrifice, which became her lifelong companion. The interior state of the young boarder thus diverging from the ordinary road, the guidance of an experienced director became necessary for her. God provided for this,

by sending to Marseilles, the Reverend Father Milley, of the Society of Jesus, a man replete with wisdom and prudence, who readily understood that he had to deal with an elect soul, and treated her accordingly. Special circumstances occasioned Madeleine's return home, at the beginning of 1709, and thus she was enabled to place herself entirely under the direction of the holy religious. The Sisters of the second Monastery of the Visitation had fulfilled their mission and formed the beloved of the Lord according to His Sacred Heart, now the Saviour Himself was to direct the course of events to His greater glory and the accomplishment of His adorable designs.

CHAPTER THIRD.

MADELEINE AT HOME.

MADELEINE was in her fifteenth year, when she again took her place in the family circle, where she was received with the greatest joy. Tokens of affection were lavished on her, her least desires were realized and everything was done to satisfy her childish in-

clination to vanity and procure for her diversions and enjoyments suitable to her station. Alas! what was all this to a soul on fire with divine love? to one whose only ambition was to immolate herself for her Saviour? Her holy director gave her counsels, suited to her present dispositions, with a rule of life, simple in apperance, but aiming at nothing less than perfection in the midst of the world. Already the wonderful effects of grace were visible in her whole conduct. The young girl evinced the most respectful tenderness towards her parents, and showed them the most thoughtful attentions, while, in the midst of her brothers and sisters, she made herself all to all. The two older ones, Gabriel and John Francis, willingly deferred to her precocious judgment, while the three younger ones, Noël Justinian, Joseph Hyacinth and Charles, submitted to the charms of her disposition and felt her presence necessary, so to say, to their merry games. Madeleine's little favorites, Catherine and Marie, learned from her to love God better and Anne, her eldest sister, made her the confidante of her most intimate thoughts.

The whole family spent the summer season at the château de la Glacière, situated near Auriol on the

left bank of the Huveaune, almost in sight of the wild and majestic rocks of the Sainte-Baume. The grounds were considerable, the house itself was a sort of castle, flanked on the north by a slight turret, terminating in a fine point. On one side of the principal façade, tufted chestnut trees, planted in rows, afforded shade in the heat and on the other, was a large farm with all its dependencies. There, more freely than at Marseilles, Madeleine could decorate the sanctuary, spend delightful hours with the God of the Eucharist and cover with flowers the altar of our Blessed Lady. Often, during the beautiful walk from her home to the home of her Beloved, she exchanged confidences with her sister Anne, taught her little sisters, Catherine and Marie to read in the great book of the universe, or instilled into the hearts of the poor, of the children of the people, the elements of faith and religion. It was a gracious sight to see that fair young girl, catechising the little and the lowly, in that simple but expressive Provençal tongue, that she spoke so fluently. Prayer, labor, and other works of charity, especially visiting the sick poor, filled in the hours of the day. After having given all that the liberality of her parents placed at

her disposal, Madeleine deprived herself of those things that young girls naturally like, dainties, jewelry, fine dresses, and even of more necessary clothing, for the sake of the indigent, who blessed her and with unanimous voices already called her "*the Saint.*"

The child also practised, as secretly as possible, severe mortifications. It is related that one of the maid-servants at La Glacière, astonished at her eager offers of service being constantly refused, suspected some mystery. Profiting by a favorable occasion, she entered Madeleine's room, and went so far as to raise the coverings of a seemingly soft bed; there she discovered a rough plank, upon which the delicate girl took her rest every night. The faithful servant could not keep to herself the secret of her young lady's austerity, which told, now to one, then to another, caused Miss Remuzat to be looked upon as *an angel of virtue and innocence.*

An incident of which the inhabitants of Auriol were witnesses, in 1710, confirmed them in the high opinion they had formed of her sanctity. It was during the week following All Souls' Day. Madeleine had taken upon herself to have the farmers awakened every morning, in order to assist at the

five o'clock Mass. Légier, the manager of the farm, accompanied his men and they generally met *the young lady*, also on her way to the church. Now, it happened one day, that the waters of the torrent Basseron, whose rocky bed was usually dry and easy to cross, suddenly swollen by the rain, had overflowed the bank and closed the entrance to the bridge; the little band of worshippers thought that the only thing to do was to turn back, but as the honest farmer afterwards said, "*Our little angel* did not do as we did; she stepped upon the waters and we saw her on the other side of the torrent, without understanding how she had crossed it and what is still more surprising is that the bottom of her clothing was not even wet." In fact, Madeleine had crossed the overflowing Basseron with dry feet. After having heard holy Mass, she quietly returned home, reproaching with their lack of courage "*those who*," she said, "*had not dared to follow a little girl.*" Good Légier did not forget this fact, which he often related with such conviction that the tradition has been faithfully preserved by his descendants, who remained in the service of the Remuzat family until about the middle of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

MADELEINE'S VOCATION.—SHE ENTERS THE VISITATION—SUPERNATURAL FAVORS. HER HOLY PROFESSION.

MADELEINE spent two years in the world, exercising, as we have seen, a veritable apostolate among all who approached her. The beauty of her soul was reflected upon her features, expressive of virginal modesty; her affable and distinguished manners, her edifying conversation, commanded respect and diffused an atmosphere of the presence of God. A divine radiance beamed forth from her person, as it were, and unconsciously she became an object of veneration, so that when turning her eyes away from created beauty, disdaining all that earth calls happiness, she sought shelter for her virtue in the cloister, the young girl had already acquired real influence in her native city, and ascendancy over hearts which, in God's time, was to facilitate the accomplishment of the heavenly decrees. To correspond to a vocation maturely examined and tried by her director, Made-

leine presented herself at the First Monastery of the Visitation, when she was entering her fifteenth year. The name of the well-known family of Remuzat and the personal reputation of the young girl obtained for her the most favorable reception and, after her vocation had been submitted to Monseigneur de Belsunce, the Bishop of Marseilles, her entrance was fixed for the second of October, feast of the Holy Angels, which, that year, 1711, coincided with the First Friday of the month. On the morning of that day, Madeleine, much affected, yet deeply recollected, left her father's house secretly and alone and crossed the threshold of the sacred abode, where her Beloved was to be All to her and she, all to Him. She was received by the honored Mother Anne-Theodore Nogaret, then Superioress, and Sister Anne-Augustine Gravier, the Mistress of the Novices, both religious of rare merit.

Madeleine wished to be a religious in the full acceptation of the term, bound and given to God without reserve. "From the first day," wrote Mother Anne Theodore, "she seemed to be formed to all the holy Rules and she was seen to tend to the purest and most sublime perfection." It was in these dis-

positions that she received the holy Habit and the name of Anne Madeleine, on the fourteenth of January, 1712. Monseigneur de Belsunce had himself examined Miss Remuzat's vocation and wished to preside at the ceremony, at which assisted a large concourse of pious and distinguished persons.

The great year of probation now began for Sister Anne Madeleine, who abandoned herself wholly and entirely to the guidance of her Superiors. The latter co-operated constantly and faithfully with the designs of the Saviour in regard to the victim He had chosen for Himself. In order to try her virtue, reproofs and corrections were not spared, but the novice showed neither surprise nor weakness, so that it seemed as if she did not know the incessant sacrifices required of her. Even her holiest attractions met with opposition, yet nothing discouraged her fervor. She could not be humbled so deeply, that she did not humble herself still more; sincere, indeed, was her low opinion of herself, as testified by her own words: "I know," she said, "that it is always right to blame me, and that I can do nothing better than be silent."

In the month of August, 1702, Anne Remuzat

came to join her sister in the noviciate and, in her turn, had to submit to the influence of a virtue that excited general admiration. The Mistress seeing Anne Madeleine evidently favored by God and perfectly docile to His Spirit, thought fit, even before her Profession, to charge her with teaching beginners the observances of the religious life and permitted many of them to make her the confidante of their joys and sorrows, of their trials and difficulties. The humble novice saw in this mark of confidence only an additional obligation to be exemplary in everything. Illumined with divine light, she read as from an open book, the souls of her companions and revealed to them the most hidden things. According to their own testimony, wonderful changes took place in their hearts and minds, several wavering vocations were strengthened, and it was observed that the prayers and even the very presence of the saintly novice were a powerful help in temptations. To keep her in humility, the Lord permitted her to pass through the crucible of interior pains and desolations. At times, entire nights were spent in inexpressible anguish and yet, when morning came, Anne Madeleine, dissimulating her

sufferings, devoted herself to her duties with serene and constant fidelity.

Meanwhile, the year of probation passed, and the young novice eagerly longed for the happy day, when she would make her Vows to Jesus, whom she had chosen as the "Only Object of her love." That day of everlasting benediction for her and the happy Community was the twenty-third of January, 1713. As large a throng of people occupied the church as at the Clothing with the holy Habit, and Monseigneur de Belsunce declared his intention to preside at the ceremony of Profession, in order to offer to the Lord, with His own hands, the innocent victim, who was, in a few short years, to be consumed in the flames of pure love. Her ensuing religious life will be an ample demonstration of the divine favors, which consecrated her soul as a vessel of honor and election.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

MISSION OF ANNE MADELEINE. HER VIRTUE.

THE impression of holiness made upon all who approached Anne Madeleine was renewed and

increased on the day of her Profession. Shortly after, numbers of persons came to beg her prayers, to confide to her their troubles and consult her in their difficulties. Dismayed at this frequent intercourse with seculars, the newly professed wished to free herself from it, but in vain. Her Superiors, after yielding to her entreaties and prudently put a stop to all kinds of visits for a year, ordered her to go to the parlor as often as she was called for. It was no longer possible to doubt that God wished her to fulfil an exceptional mission towards souls, unique even in the history of the Visitation. Numberless facts prove that He bestowed on His servant the gift of prophecy, an insight of consciences, and the knowledge of events taking place at a distance. Then was seen at Marseilles the unheard of spectacle of a young religious, between nineteen and twenty, acting as arbiter in the most obscure questions and giving decisions with such authority, that every objection gave way to the words: "Sister Remuzat said so." Monseigneur de Belsunce did not deem it beneath his dignity to consult his pious daughter, not only in regard to his personal concerns, but also for the affairs of his diocese, and he frequently

declared that she spoke as one enlightened by God. Meanwhile, the lowly religious whose name was on all lips, continued her daily life of prayer and humility, practising every monastic virtue in a sublime degree, and making obedience her safeguard. Relying on the word of her Superioress, she went to creatures as do the Angels, bearers of some heavenly message, keeping the eyes of her soul fixed upon God. Returning to her dear solitude, she spent long hours before the Tabernacle, praying for the world that does not pray and becoming so inflamed with divine love that, on leaving prayer, her face seemed to be on fire and, as it were, transfigured. With the consent of Monseigneur de Belsunce, and Mother Anne Theodore, Anne Madeleine bound herself by perpetual vow, in the beginning of her religious life, to do what she believed to be most perfect. In reward of such a generous resolution, our Lord gave Himself liberally to His faithful Spouse, and she was soon admitted to daily Communion.

Nine months after her holy Profession, the young religious received from Heaven the special mission to become *the Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred*

Heart. It was on October seventeenth, 1713, that this important revelation took place, as she attests in a letter, written to her director, some years later, under date of October fourteenth, 1721. She wrote: "Next Friday, the anniversary of the death of our Venerable Sister Alacoque, it will be eight years since our Lord made known to me in a very *special* and *extraordinary* manner, His designs over me, in regard to the glory of His adorable Heart. If this letter reaches you before Friday, you will oblige me by not forgetting to give thanks to God, at the Altar, for this favor." The details of this *special* and *extraordinary* revelation have remained the secret of the happy privileged Sister, but the burning zeal that, thenceforth, consumed her, the share she took in the great events that led to the propagation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, allow us to conjecture what she has not revealed to us.

The hour had come when the Saviour wished to associate her as victim and apostle in His work of Redemption. It was only by doing extreme violence to self, that the humble religious fulfilled her mission towards souls, and very often her charity and zeal were repaid only by unkindly deeds, bitter reproaches

and even injuries. At the same time, she was happy in her allotted task, provided that her sufferings might sooner or later obtain the Saviour's triumph in erring souls. Towards the end of her life, on the eighth of December, 1727, carrying still further this heroic disinterestedness, she, with the approbation of her Superiors, bound herself by special vow, under the auspices of the most Blessed Virgin, *to pray, suffer and act, according to the inspirations of God, in favor of those particular souls for whom it might please Him to accept her prayers and sufferings.* Thus the divine High Priest could dispose of the fruits of the sacrifice, the victim reserving to herself only the right to be immolated.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

EXTRAORDINARY FAVORS. ASSOCIATION OF PERPETUAL ADORATION.

ANNE MADELEINE was truly the "garden enclosed," for, though so highly favored by God, she was distinguished exteriorly from her Sisters, only by more profound humility and more exact fidelity to all her religious duties; she responded to the

first call of obedience and breathed nothing but charity in the common life. Named Directress of the boarders, on leaving the noviciate, she displayed towards the children entrusted to her the wisdom and self-sacrifice of a saint, united to the devotedness and tenderness of a mother.

This fervent lover of the Sacred Heart had an insatiable thirst for suffering, in order to avenge upon herself the outrages committed against her good Master; but Mother Anne Theodore, knowing the weakness of the health of her dear daughter, moderated her desire for penance. One day, however, inspired to ascertain the Will of God in this regard, she dared to ask for a miracle. Anne Madeleine having asked permission to spend the night in prayer, her Superioress said: "I consent, on condition that you will obtain the cure of your sick headaches. By this sign, I shall know that it is God who acts in you, and I will allow you to follow His Spirit." The miracle was obtained: Anne Madeleine never suffered from this indisposition, during the remaining fifteen years of her life. Henceforth, authorized to follow the impulse of her fervor, she practised great mortifications, severe penances and rigorous fasts;

she also spent three nights a week before the Blessed Sacrament, in union with the painful agony of her Saviour. Finally, during her retreat of 1716, aflame with divine love, she seized a red-hot iron and engraved upon her heart the blessed Name of Jesus; upon her left arm, the figure of a heart transpierced by two spears; and upon her breast, the most holy Name of God. The deep wounds caused by these incisions soon became more dangerous than the heroic lover had foreseen, but, as she resigned herself to give them the necessary care, the Lord Himself became her Physician and her Remedy, by suddenly healing them.

While this innocent victim was thus immolating herself for God and religion, Jansenism was sowing broadcast its pernicious doctrines. Anne Madeleine, penetrated with sorrow at seeing "God so much offended and so little loved," sought, in the bitterness of her heart, for some compensation to offer Him. It was then that the Association of the *Perpetual Adoration of the Sacred Heart* was shown to her, as a source of sanctification for souls and as the means of providing her divine Master with a *number of friends, upon whom He could count.*

After having obtained the permission of her Superiors, Anne Madeleine sent to solicit from Rome two Briefs of Indulgences, which were granted by Clement the Eleventh, on the twenty-eighth and thirtieth of August, 1717. She herself afterwards drew up the Statutes of the Association in a few pages, admirable for precision and simplicity. These Statutes, honored by Monseigneur de Belsunce with a flattering approbation, were printed for the first time in 1718 and circulated so rapidly, that repeated editions had to be issued. The Confraternity just erected had the same object as those which already existed in several Monasteries of the Visitation: to render to the Heart of Jesus unceasing reparation, adoration and love. Such a thought corresponded too well to the need of faithful souls not to be received with holy eagerness. The illustrious Bishop of Marseilles wished to inscribe his name at the head of the register of associates, and his example aroused great enthusiasm in the city. The Monastery was, so to say, besieged, and several religious were hardly sufficient to inscribe the names of those who desired to be admitted into the Confraternity. Soon all the pious families and the Communities of Mar-

seilles and its environs were enrolled under the banner of the Sacred Heart. This was still too little for the zealous apostle, to whom her good Master had said, in the secret of retreat: "Receive a participation in the riches of My Heart and strive to honor It and have It honored throughout the world." To attain this end, what would she not have done and suffered? She prayed and exhorted, she sent to distant places the little book of the Association, accompanied by the most persuasive letters. Thus, in less than twelve years, the name of sixty thousand associates must have been inscribed in the Confraternity of Marseilles, yet the wishes of the ardent apostle knew no bounds. What she wanted, in order to honor the Sacred Heart, was a feast as solemn as that of Corpus Christi. She wrote: "When will the Heart of Jesus receive from the whole Church the worship that It expects? I would be delighted to contribute thereto, even by my death, and then, I would say, with my whole heart: 'Let Him reign and let me die.'" Heaven could not withstand such darts of love, which, continually breaking at the foot of the great White Throne, must have hastened the execution of the divine plans.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

MIRACLE.—FIRST REVELATIONS.—THE PLAGUE AT MARSEILLES, 1720.

AT this epoch, Jansenism was rife in the Church of France, as has been already stated, and in devoting herself unreservedly to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart, Madeleine's great aim was to antidote its pernicious effects, but the measure of iniquity was full; yet, in His tenderness for the guilty city, our blessed Lord wished to reclaim it by a striking miracle and to make known, in advance the chastisement that threatened it.

During the Forty Hours before the Lent of 1718, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the church of the Cordelier Fathers and an immense congregation was present. Suddenly our Lord Jesus Christ became visible in the Host, His Face was of dazzling majesty and the glances that He cast upon the assembled faithful were, at the same time, so tender and so severe that no one could stand them. Before the news passed the precincts of the church, Anne

Madeleine was supernaturally informed of the prodigy and God revealed to her that if the city did not correspond to this appeal of His mercy, He would chastise it in so terrible a manner, that the whole universe would be terrified. The servant of God made known the details of this revelation first to her Superioress, then to Monseigneur de Belsunce, through the Reverend Father Milley. The Bishop exhorted his people to penance, but they turned a deaf ear to his voice and hurried on to perdition.

Two years elapsed, after which the storm excited by former impieties and the abuse of present graces, at last broke forth in so fearful a manner, that history records nothing similar to the horrors of the plague at Marseilles. Tidings had just been received of the ravages of the pestilence in the East, when, on the twenty-fifth of May, 1720, a ship, named "The Great Saint Anthony," entering the port of Marseilles, brought with it desolation and death. The nature of the disease, concealed for some time, was recognized from the twenty-first of July: the plague reigned supreme in the proud Phocian city and its progress was so rapid and alarming, that on July thirty-first, a sanitary cordon was placed around the

town. At the beginning of August, each day counted its victims by hundreds and the number of deaths soon increased to a thousand, then to fifteen hundred. The maddened population scattered about the country, lodging in tents; while others entering barques, put out to sea. The garrison withdrew into the forts, while ten thousand galley-slaves among whom the epidemic had already broken out, were set at liberty. Then Marseilles became an object of horror. Nothing was heard but cries and groans; nothing was seen but scavenger's carts, filled with dead bodies; horrible looking shrouds, through which could be traced the human form, were lifted down from the upper stories into these unsightly hearses, a ghastly spectacle, that sent a thrill of horror through the beholder. Famine was added to the plague and in three months the great, populous city of the sea had parted with one half of its inhabitants. The heroic Bishop Belsunce remained intrepid in the midst of the dead and dying. After having given all that he possessed, he pledged his revenues for several years to come and black bread became his only food.

Cloistered religious had received from the prelate

permission to leave their convents and seek a refuge from the scourge ; but a large number of these pious solitaries and the Daughters of the Visitation in particular, preferred to keep their enclosure at the peril of their lives. Strong in unwavering confidence in God, calm and peaceful in their holy abodes, although they ran the greatest dangers and suffered the severest hardships, they prayed and did penance for the guilty city. Anne Madeleine especially raised to Heaven her suppliant hands, "Offering herself to God a million of times," Mother Anne Theodore wrote, "to be His victim and bear the weight of His anger and vengeance." So generous a donation was accepted. To the physical sufferings of this magnanimous soul, was added indescribable moral martyrdom. Then, too, she was deprived of her valuable support, the Reverend Father Milley, the indefatigable auxiliary of Monseigneur de Belsunce, having succumbed on the second of September, a martyr to his devotedness in the service of the pest-stricken. By the advice of her Superioress, Anne Madeleine had recourse to his intercession and the servant of God appearing to her in a cloud of glory, she felt herself suddenly delivered, if not from all

her sufferings, at least from her cruel apprehensions, and peace was restored to her afflicted soul.

A still greater consolation closely followed this great grace. One day, when the gentle victim was in prayer, her divine Master gave her to understand that He lent a favorable ear to her petitions, although He did not yet grant them ; that the time of His mercy *would* come, and that, by means of the calamities, with which Marseilles was afflicted, she would see established the feast in honor of His Sacred Heart, the object of her ardent longings. This announcement threw her into transports of joy : "O happy scourge," she exclaimed, "since it is to procure the glory of the Heart of my Saviour." She had on this occasion only a general view of what was to happen, but her Superioress, Mother Françoise-Bénigne d'Orlyé de Saint-Innocent, having ordered her to redouble her supplications, our Lord vouchsafed to give her the assurance that the contagion would cease, and dictated to her the conditions of peace, offered to His people. He asked *that the solemn feast* which He had so many years before demanded of his humble lover, Blessed Margaret Mary, *should be instituted on the day which He Him-*

self had chosen to have His Sacred Heart honored, that is, the day after the octave of Corpus Christi, *and that, until this honor was rendered Him, every one of the Faithful should, in a prayer selected by the Bishop, consecrate himself to the honor of this adorable Heart.* Monseigneur de Belsunce, to whom the humble religious made known this revelation, did not doubt its heavenly origin, and feeling confidence revive in his soul, he was eager to execute the orders given, being convinced that God thus made known to him the remedy that was to save His people. In his pastoral letter of the twenty-second of October, 1720, he established in his diocese as a holyday of obligation, with proper Mass and Office, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Moreover, *to follow out the plan that Anne Madeleine had traced for him*, says a contemporary, he went on the feast of All Saints, barefooted, with a rope around his neck and a cross in his arms, to an altar erected at the upper end of the square that bears his name. After a touching allocution, the fervent Bishop made a solemn act of reparation, followed by the consecration of the city and diocese to the Sacred Heart, then celebrated the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

That very day, the plague decreased and, shortly after, disappeared altogether.

However, the reparation made to the justice of God remained incomplete ; the magistrates had taken no part in the ceremony of the first of November. Moreover, Marseilles soon forgetting its misfortunes and its promises, abandoned itself anew to crime and impiety ; so, when least expected, in May, 1722, the plague reappeared, even more malignant than the previous time. Monseigneur de Belsunce discovered without difficulty the cause of the evil and pointed out the remedy. At his proposition, the magistrates made a vow, by which they *pledged themselves and their successors in perpetuity, to go every year, on the Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, to hear holy Mass in the church of the First Monastery of the Visitation, called the "Great Mary's" ; to communicate there, and offer a taper, or torch of white wax, of four pounds' weight, decorated with the escutcheon of the city, to burn that day before the Blessed Sacrament ; on the evening of the same day, to assist at a general procession to take place from the cathedral church.* This Vow was pronounced and signed on the fourth of June, 1622, the feast of

Corpus Christi, by the magistrates, Mousties, Dieudé, Saint-Michel and Peter Remuzat, Anne Madeleine's uncle. It was accomplished for the first time at the Monastery of the Visitation, on the following twelfth of June, and the plague immediately diminished its ravages, in so evident a manner, that the prodigy was manifest. Marseilles had become, in deed and truth, the city of the Sacred Heart and, according to the expression of its great Bishop, "it was going to announce its deliverance to the extremities of the earth and publish among the nations the glory of its Liberator." The diocese of Marseilles, proud and happy to be the first consecrated to the Sacred Heart, was, in the course of years, to see its example imitated by all the churches of the world.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

SUPERNATURAL FAVORS. HER BLESSED DEATH.

SISTER ANNE MADELEINE'S mission was drawing to a close. In the events recorded in the preceding chapter, she had been an angel of peace, and Monseigneur de Belsunce had received her communications as inspirations from Heaven. In the joy of

her soul, she saw the triumph of the Sacred Heart and affirmed that *this devotion would soon have still greater increase*, "but," she said, "I shall not see it." Having been interiorly assured from her earliest years, that she would die at the age of thirty-three, she quickened her steps to attain the summit of the mountain of perfection. At this time of her life, the faithful Spouse of Jesus was overwhelmed with extraordinary favors. Several times the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity appeared to her, and, one day, even vouchsafed to contract with her soul an alliance of love and mercy. "What have I done to God!" she exclaimed, "that He should thus show Himself to me? or rather, what must I not do for Him? *Why can I not attract all hearts to Him?*" The divine Spirit taking full possession of her heart, she enjoyed in ecstasy of prayer the delights of a soul intimately united with its God. "If this lasts," she said, "I must die, but how beautiful to die for God!"

Such was the holy religious, when the honored Mother Anne Theodore, consulting neither her tastes, nor her strength, but sure of her virtue, named her procuratrix of the Monastery. With profound edification, the Community then saw this real ecstatica

leave, at the first sign of obedience, the sweetness of contemplation and devote herself to her laborious employment with unbounded forethought, self-sacrifice, and charity. The young procuratrix showed in her whole conduct that, for the soul of faith, the life of Martha and the life of Mary are not incompatible She took for herself the greater part of the labor, acknowledging, however, that miraculous strength was always appropriately given her, according to the continuance of the work, and that her mind was never diverted from God by the multitude of her occupations. In fact, it was in fulfilling with so much simplicity her task of devotedness, that Anne Madeleine was finally consumed by the ardors of the martyrdom of love. During the last years of her life, her mind and soul were illuminated with heavenly brightness, while her poor sensitive nature was deprived of all palpable consolation ; her heart was crushed by indefinable anguish and, that nothing might escape the fire of suffering, the sacred stigmatas wrought upon her innocent flesh secret destruction. Although, through divine condescension, the Saviour permitted that these marks should never be visible, they were painful ; every moment,

it seemed to her as if large nails were being driven into her hands and feet, and that her sides were devoured with burning fever. To crown His favors to His devoted servant, our Lord one day took away her heart, and placed it within His own, then returned it, glowing with more ardent flames of love. This favor was accorded her on the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, a day often consecrated for Anne Madeleine by special graces. To this soul, purified by suffering and divinized by love, the Lord already gave a foretaste of the inebriating delights of her true country. The Guardian Angels of her Sisters showed themselves visibly to her and, at times, God allowed her to participate in the glory that the Blessed Spirits find in Him. "This participation," she wrote, "was more abundant on their festivals; it seemed to me that a light common to us both made us all draw from the same Bosom and held me ravished with them in the Object of their love and glory."

Meanwhile the term of Anne Madeleine's pilgrimage was fast approaching. She knew it, because, from her earliest youth, she had positively asserted that she would die at the age of thirty-three. Reach-

ing this much desired age, she could no longer repress the transports of her joy. During the first days of 1730 she was heard to exclaim: "I shall die this year. How beautiful it is to die at thirty-three." Toward the end of January, when the influenza was prevalent in the Community, Anne Madeleine had a sudden hemorrhage, which seemed to her to be the signal for the coming of the Bridegroom. No one, however, suspected the gravity of her indisposition, and they believed her end to be near only because she insisted on the fact. Her illness was to be but of short duration; but God willing to treat her as a victim until the end, added sufferings of the soul to physical exhaustion and, according to her expression, *all in her was crucified.* Far from complaining of this, she said: "I should not have believed that God would grant me so many graces, as to allow me so much suffering for love of Him." She asked to receive the last Sacraments and, after a general confession, which her humility desired to make, she said to the confessor: "Ah! Father, how great are the mercies of God. Speak to me of the Heart of Jesus." At the approach of the Holy Viaticum, the dying religious exclaimed

in a transport of joy: "Is it indeed true that this is the happy moment, when I am going to live forever in the Heart of Jesus?" Shortly after, she expired, ardently longing to be united to her God, and her soul, like a white dove, flew into the Bosom of its Beloved. It was five o'clock on the morning of the fifteenth of February. Anne Madeleine was aged thirty-three years, two months and seventeen days. At the very moment of this blessed death, a bright cloud appeared above the Monastery and the château de la Glacière, where Mr. Remuzat then resided. Those who saw it did not hesitate to say that the Blessed One must be dead, of which they shortly after ascertained the fact. At Marseilles was repeated on all sides with consternation: "*The Saint is dead!*" and every one desired some little souvenir of her. The Jesuit Fathers of the residence of Holy Cross sent to beg Mother Anne Theodore to reserve for them some of Anne Madeleine's blood. The Sisters decided to have her heart removed, and when the surgeon uncovered the breast, he noticed the Name of God engraved upon it in capital letters; he saw also the figure of a heart imprinted on the side and, overcome with astonishment, he acknowledged

that the Hand of God alone could have formed these characters. Afterwards, the effigy of the holy religious was taken, by means of a plaster mould, into which melted wax was poured.

The obsequies of the humble virgin were a veritable triumph, and Monseigneur de Belsunce, who claimed the honor of presiding at them, at the head of the Cathedral Chapter, deemed proper, on this occasion to permit the large and eager throng to enter the enclosure. The mortal remains of Anne Madeleine were carried to the vault of the Community, beneath the choir of the religious, where they remained exposed until the next day, Monseigneur de Belsunce having ordered that a serious examination of the singular marks found upon the virginal body of the deceased, be instituted. The whole was attested in due form.

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE MEMORY OF ANNE MADELEINE.

IMMEDIATELY after the death of Anne Madeleine recourse was had to her intercession with God, and miraculous favors were obtained in such great num-

bers, that her cousin, Sister Madeleine Angélique Vincent said: "I would need to write for an entire month to record them all."

This veneration for the tomb of the Virgin of Marseilles lasted until the fatal epoch of the French Revolution, when the Community of the First Monastery was, as so many others, broken up and dispersed. Driven from their peaceful retreat, the religious had to leave behind them the precious remains of this privileged Sister, and the silence of death enveloped the blessed body, which the most active researches have not yet been able to recover. Other dear relics, fortunately shielded from perquisition and consigned to a place of safety, during the revolutionary storm, remain, to-day, the real treasure of Anne Madeleine's Sisters. With piety and confidence, they venerate her heart, that heart which, once plunged into the Heart of Jesus, became inflamed by the fiery contact, and when opened, fifty-three hours after the death of the Servant of God, was found to be full of red and liquid blood. Then enclosed in an exquisite casket of carved wood, it has been the object of marvellous preservation, no trace of embalming having ever been discovered.

There is also preserved in the Monastery in a niche of antique pottery the waxen effigy, reproducing the features of the Venerable Sister; also some portions of her clothing and her instruments of penance, still tinged with her blood. Thus Anne Madeleine ever lives in the midst of her religious family, to be its protector and invite souls to the imitation of her heroic virtues. Her memory, transmitted from generation to generation, is faithfully preserved in the little town of Auriol, where is still shown the room occupied by her whom they have never ceased to call "*the Blessed One*"—"*the Saint.*"

The results of the mission confided by our Lord Himself to His humble apostle, are always visible and durable. The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, established by her care, and flourishing until the dispersion of the Community, was re-established after the restoration of the Monastery in 1806. In order to give it still wider development, Monseigneur Robert, the eminent Bishop of Marseilles, obtained from Rome, in 1880, a Brief, erecting it into an Archconfraternity. As to the Vow made by the magistrates, it was uninterruptedly accomplished, even in the fatal days of the Reign of Terror. Even

to-day (1899), the Church of the Visitation offers, on the feast of the Sacred Heart, the impressive sight of an immense and recollected throng crowding into it, to assist at the Mass, celebrated by His Lordship the Bishop. The honorable members of the Chamber of Commerce, in default of the Municipality which, for twenty years, has thought proper *to exempt itself*, receive Holy Communion and offer the traditional candle. His Lordship renews the Act of Reparation and the Consecration, composed by the immortal Bishop de Belsunce. In fine, the solemn Procession, which has been forbidden to pass through the streets, is made with not less fidelity in the Cathedral. The blessed name of Anne Madeleine, always heard amid these touching demonstrations, loudly proclaims that she was the mediatrix between God and her people, and remains forever the apostle of the devotion so dear to Marseilles.

Numerous favors, obtained in our age, and especially during these latter years, have revived in hearts the desire to see the angelic virgin raised to the honors of Beatification. Monseigneur Robert, accepting the Postulatory Letters, presented to him for this purpose, opened, in 1885, a diocesan inquiry,

which led to the introduction of the Cause at the Court of Rome, on the twenty-fourth of December, 1891. The Apostolic Processes, commenced shortly after, are being actively pursued and permit us to catch a glimpse of the hour, when the Lord Himself will exalt this humble lover of His divine Heart. Confidence in the intercession of the Venerable Sister increases every day; so that, at the First Monastery of the Visitation of Marseilles are recorded twenty-five thousand novenas, made at the request of the pious faithful, since the beginning of the proceedings in 1885. Numerous ex-votos offered in gratitude for favors obtained, not only prove her power in Heaven, but also attest the truth of the words which fell, one day, from the lips of Anne Madeleine: "God, almighty as He is, has not the power to refuse Himself to a soul who gives herself to Him without reserve."

Obtain for us, O sweet Victim of the Saviour, to yield ourselves up, as thou didst, to the mercy of love, in order that, having walked in thy footprints along the painful pathways of life, we may, throughout eternity, contemplate and bless with thee the Sacred Heart!

CAUSE OF THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD,

SISTER ANNE MADELEINE REMUZAT,

PROFESSED RELIGIOUS OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION OF HOLY MARY.

Super dubio :

" An sit signanda Commissio introductionis Causæ in casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur ?

Massiliæ ortum duxit anno 1696, Anna Magdalena Remuzat, sanctimonialis ex Ordine Visitationis Beatæ Mariæ Virginis. Conspicua ejus virtutum præstantia, præsertim vero admirabilis erga Sacratissimum Cor Jesu pietas ac devotio, necnon ardens studium in propagando ipsius Divini Cordis cultu, tum in toto Visitationis Ordine, tum apud Massilienses, præclaram Eidem sanctitatis famam compararunt. Hæc autem sanctitatis fama, cœlestibus quoque suffulta charismatibus atque prodigiis quæ huiusce fidelis suæ Ancillæ intercessione a Deo patrata ferebantur post ipsius obitum, qui contigit anno 1730, nedum non intercidit, sed in dies magis mirifice excrevit. Quare factum est, ut R.mus Episcopus

Massiliensis Inquisitionem super euisdem Servæ Dei fama sanctitatis vitæ, virtutum ac miraculorum Ordinaria auctoritate tandem instituerit. Qua rite expleta, et ad Sacram Rituum Congregationem exhibita Sanctissimus Dominus Noster Leo Papa XIII. benigne indulsit, ut de Dubio signaturæ Commissionis introductionis Causæ prædictæ Servæ Dei agi posse in eadem Sacra Rituum Congregatione Ordinaria, absque interventu et voto Consultorum, et si nondum elapso decennio a die præsentationis Informativi Processus in Actis ipsius Sacræ Congregationis Hinc a me infrascripto Sacræ eidem Congregationi, Præfecto Causæque Relatore, ad instantiam R. mi D. ni Caroli Nocella Pronototarii Apostolici, huiusce Causæ Postulatoris, attentis postulatoriis litteris Serenissimi Austriæ Imperatoris, plurimorum Em. orum Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ Cardinalium R. morum Antistitum Sacrorum, aliorumque Virorum tam eccesiastica quam civili dignitate illustrium, in Ordinario Sacrorum Rituum Congregationis Cœtu, ad Vaticanum subsignata die coadunato, sequens Dubium discutiendum propositum fuit, nimirum: *An sit signanda Commissio introdutionis causae in casu, et ad effectum de quo agitur?*

Sacra porro eadem Congregatio, omnibus maturo examine perpensis, auditoque voce et scripto R. P. D. Augustino Caprara S. Fidei Promo. tore, rescribendum censuit: *Affirmative, si Sanctissimo Placuerit.*

Die 19 decembris, 1891.

Quibus omnibus per infrascriptum Secretarium Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Leoni Papæ XIII. fideliter relatis, Sanctitas sua sententiam Sacræ Congregationis ratam habuit et confirmavit; propriaque signare dignata est Commissionem introductionis Causæ Præfatæ Ven. Servæ Dei Annæ Magdalenæ Remuzat.

Die 24 üsdem mensæ et anno.

CAI., CARDINAL ALOÏSI MASSELLA,
R. S. C. Præfectus,
VINC. NUSSI, *Sec.*

TRANSLATION.

On the doubt :

Is there reason to sign the Commission for the introduction of the Cause in the case and for the purpose in question ?

Anne Madeleine Remuzat, religious of the Visi-

tation of Holy Mary, was born at Marseilles, in 1696. The remarkable superiority of her virtues, and particularly her admirable love and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as well as the ardor of her zeal, in propagating the worship of this divine Heart, throughout the Order of the Visitation and among the people of Marseilles acquired for her an astonishing reputation for holiness. This reputation for holiness, supported by heavenly favors and miracles wrought by God, as were attributed, to the intercession of His faithful servant, after her death, in 1730, far from diminishing, has day by day so marvellously increased, that the Bishop of Marseilles went so far as to make the Inquiry of the Ordinary on the reputation for holiness, the virtues and the miracles. Brought to a close, according to all the rules, this Process having been presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, His Holiness Pope Leo the Thirteenth has deigned to permit discussion of the doubt of the signature of the commission for the introduction of the Cause of this Servant of God, in the Congregation of the Ordinary, without the intervention and the vote of the Consulters, although ten years have not elapsed

since the day when this Process was deposited in the Acts of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. For this reason, on the petition of Monsignor Charles Nocella, prothonotary apostolic and postulator of the Cause, taking into consideration the postulatory letters of His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, a very large number of the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, Archbishops and Bishops, and many other personages ranked in ecclesiastical or civil dignity, in the ordinary meeting of the Congregation of Rites, held in the Vatican, on the day mentioned below, We, the undersigned Prefect of the said Congregation and Deponent of the Cause have proposed the discussion of the following doubt: *is there reason to sign the Commission for the introduction of the Cause in the case and for the purpose in question?*

The Sacred Congregation, after having weighed all things in a mature examination, and heard the remarks made by word of mouth and in writing, by the Reverend Father D. Augustin Caprara, Promoter of the Faith, was of opinion to answer: *Affirmatively, if such is the good pleasure of His Holiness*, the nineteenth of December, 1891.

A faithful report of all this having been presented to His Holiness the Pope Leo the Thirteenth, by the undersigned Secretary, His Holiness ratified and confirmed the decision of the Sacred Congregation and with his own hand condescended to sign the Commission for the introduction of the Cause of the Venerable Servant of God, Anne Madeleine Remuzat, on the twenty-fourth of December, of the same year.

GAETAN,
CARDINAL ALOISI-MASSELA,
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

VINCENT MUSSI, *Secretary.*

LIFE OF MOTHER MARY DE SALES CHAPPUIS.

OF THE

VISITATION OF HOLY MARY.

LIFE OF MOTHER MARY DE SALES CHAPPUIS,

OF THE

VISITATION OF HOLY MARY.

CHAPTER FIRST.

HER BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD (1793–1811).

MARY TERESA CHAPPUIS was born at Soyhières, a little village on the confines of the Swiss Jura, on the sixteenth of June, 1793. Like Saint Francis of Sales, whose favored daughter she was one day to be, Teresa was a child of prayer. And if, as there can be no doubt, the prayers of a mother have a wonderful efficacy over the soul of her child, this was indeed the case with regard to the little Teresa. The ever-increasing horrors of the Revolution caused Madame Chappuis such constant fear and anxiety for the safety of her family, that, previous to the birth of her child, her life was several times in danger.

Many and fervent, therefore, were the prayers she

uttered and the promises she made for the little one that was about to be born in such sad and troubled times. And we may truly say that even before her birth, the eye of God prospectively rested with complacency upon her, and that He awaited only the regenerating waters of baptism, to efface from her soul the stain of original sin, in order to bestow upon her the abundance of divine favors.

Her parents belonged to the most ancient families of the neighborhood, and were revered and respected by all for their virtue and liberality. M. Pierre Joseph Chappuis had formerly served in the Life Guards of Louis XVI., but on the occasion of his marriage with Mdlle. Catherine Fleury, he resigned his commission, much to the regret of the King, who had honored him with many proofs of his esteem and confidence. On his side, M. Chappuis always maintained feelings of tender devotedness towards the Royal Family, sentiments which he transmitted to his children, together with traditions of honor and loyalty, and that exquisite politeness of manner, which was so characteristic of the ancient French "noblesse."

Teresa was the seventh of the eleven children with

which heaven had blessed their marriage, and was so frail, that it was thought impossible she could live more than a few hours. But her pious mother, assured by an interior light that the sacrament of baptism would revive her, and give her all that was wanting to enable her to live, besought those around to procure at once this grace for her child. But what was to be done in those days of terror? No priest was to be had, for Soyhières was then under the dominion of France, and it was death to any priest who was discovered exercising his sacred ministry.

A brother of M. Chappuis, who happened to be present, immediately resolved upon a plan which proved well the vivacity of his faith. "I will take my little niece," said he, "to be baptized at Petit-Lucelle." Petit-Lucelle is a village about two miles distant from Soyhières, from which it is separated by a steep mountain, that serves as frontier between the two communes; and not being under the revolutionary dominion, this village had preserved its church and priest. The little infant was therefore placed in a market basket, and covered with a clean cloth; and, shouldering his precious burden, the good

uncle started on his journey, which was not without considerable risk and danger. God, however, rewarded his faith; after a somewhat narrow escape, he arrived safely at the village, and little Teresa was baptized on the very day of her birth.

Madame Chappuis henceforth looked upon this dear child, who still continued exceedingly delicate, as a treasure entrusted to her by God, and she left nothing undone to preserve a life that had been so marvellously restored. She not only provided carefully for her temporal necessities, but far more for the welfare of her soul. She taught her early to know and love God, and inspired her with an intense horror of anything that might displease Him. Teresa was scarcely able to speak, when she already began to show by signs her love for all objects of devotion. When at prayer, she would join her little hands, and the angelic expression of her countenance, together with the profound recollection of her whole being, was so striking, that those present were wont to exclaim: "This child will one day be a saint."

During her whole life she retained this attitude when at prayer, together with an expression of can-

dor and the charm of a child, speaking to God with all the effusion of its soul.

It was her delight to join her brothers and sisters in all their devotions. When only four years of age, she perceived that they rose every night towards midnight, and went silently to take part in some mysterious act of piety that was unknown to her. Teresa was greatly distressed at this, and immediately besought her mother, to tell her what it was that her brothers and sisters did in the night. On her promising faithfully to keep the secret, Madame Chappuis told her that she should be called with the others that night. What was her surprise on being taken into a room in her aunt's house, to see an altar on which were lighted tapers, and near it a priest, whom she recognized as her uncle, vested for Mass, while several persons were kneeling around in silent adoration. At first everything seemed to her strangely mysterious, but at the moment of the Elevation, "I understood all," she afterwards said; "God revealed Himself to me; I saw that it was the Sacrifice of my Saviour; and the impression and illumination I then received have ever since been present to my mind."

M. Fleury, the good priest, had been for many years Curé of Soyhières; but, owing to the terrors of the Revolution, he was compelled to remain in close concealment during the day-time, and it was only under cover of the night that he ventured to issue forth from his hiding-place, in order to breathe for a few moments the fresh air, and say Mass in an adjoining room, at which the family of M. Chappuis and a few faithful and trustworthy servants assisted. Such scenes were well calculated to make a deep and lasting impression on the mind of a child like Teresa.

From her earliest years she inherited from her parents that reverence and respect for the priests of God, which was so remarkable in her during the whole course of her life; together with a love for truth and justice, of which she had so noble an example in her father. From her mother, who was a model of all domestic virtues, she imbibed a devoted love for the poor and needy, and especially for the exiled French priests, for whom her tender heart felt the deepest compassion. It was her greatest happiness to assist her good mother in the many generous services which she continually offered to those confessors of

the Faith, many of whom were concealed under her hospitable roof or, when that became too dangerous, in the neighboring farms; and at the tender age of six years, Teresa was employed by Madame Chappuis as a sufficiently discreet and trustworthy messenger.

She had a passionate love of nature, and of all that is true and beautiful. The grace of Baptism had strengthened and developed all the natural qualities of her mind and heart; and, though but a child, she already fore-shadowed what she would one day be, and was named, by the villagers and the servants of the house, "M. Chappuis' little saint." Her natural earnestness of character caused her to take no pleasure in the toys and pastimes of children of her age; she always received them with sweetness and affectionate thanks, but after looking at them for a few minutes, and expressing her admiration, she would take them to her mother to be put away in the cupboard. Her uncle once gave her a beautiful doll; as soon as Teresa found herself alone, she took it in her arms, and, looking at it attentively, said: "Who created you, and placed you in this world?" and, on receiving no answer, exclaimed: "It has no

soul: it can neither know, love, nor serve God: I will have nothing to do with it." So saying, she cast the doll contemptuously away, nor would she ever look at it again. She once heard a lady, who had lived a pious and edifying life, say at the hour of death: "O my God, how hard it is to see the light, when there is no more time to profit by it." These words made such an impression on Teresa, that she used often to say: "O my God, I beseech Thee to give me light, while there is yet time; it is so sad not to see what we have to do for Thee!"

At the age of eight years, Teresa received her First Communion. Her innocence and purity of soul had won for her the special love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and this was the moment chosen by Him to bestow upon her the first fruits of the many signal graces which He had destined for her. She too gave herself unreservedly to God, promising to live henceforth only for Him.

It must not be supposed, however, that these extraordinary favors of the divine goodness made this young child less sociable; far from it, she was all the more sweet and engaging with her brothers and sisters; for God became, so to say, the bond which

united her soul most intimately with her home, her family, and her country.

Shortly after Teresa's First Communion, the church of Soyhières, which had been closed during the days of the Revolution, was restored to the use of the pious villagers, and the good Curé was once more able to exercise freely his priestly functions. To his beloved niece was allotted the charge of the sanctuary lamp, and nothing could equal the zeal and devotion with which she accomplished this duty of love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Amongst her brothers and sisters, there was one for whom Teresa felt a special affection. The nearness of age, character, and disposition, together with the delicate health of François, united them in the closest bonds of friendship. Together they performed their exercises of devotion, and constructed huts in imitation of the hermits, where they conversed together on God and holy things, and confided to each other their desire of becoming saints.

In the neighborhood of Soyhières is a shrine consecrated to Our Lady of Forbourg. This was a favorite place of pilgrimage for the two children; it was to Our Lady of Forbourg that they went in all

their necessities, and nothing was done without having first consulted her; thither, too, Madame Chappuis would send them to obtain any special grace for herself or family. On the opposite side of the village may be seen, half way up the mountain, a little ruined church, dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Souls. François, who was already attacked by that terrible illness, which, after eleven years of lingering consumption, was to end in a premature death, was particularly drawn to this deserted sanctuary. "Come," he would say to Teresa, "let us go and pray for the dead, and in so doing we shall also be praying for me." After a long and fatiguing walk, they would arrive at the chapel, where, after passing some time in prayer, they would sit on a stone facing this desolate spot, and speak together long and earnestly of the happiness of seeing and loving God eternally.

At the age of twelve years, Teresa was sent to the School of the Visitation at Fribourg in Switzerland. The separation from her family, especially from her beloved brother François, caused her such intense suffering as to endanger her health, and even her life. She nevertheless persevered, and remained there

three years, during which time she was frequently obliged to return to Soyhières, on account of ill-health. Her unpretending virtue and amiability of manner, won for her the love and esteem of all with whom she came in contact; for understanding the important truth, that the perfection of a pupil consists in not distinguishing herself by any peculiarities from her companions, with whom she should form but one heart and one soul, this young girl made herself so completely all to all, that she seemed, as it were, to pass unobserved among them.

Shortly after her return home, she had the grief of assisting at the death-bed of her brother François. Her last request to him was, that he should obtain for her from God the grace never to know any other love here below than that of His divine Will, and that she might live only for His holy love. François promised, and after receiving the last sacraments, he breathed forth his pure soul into the hands of Him Whom he had loved and served so faithfully during his short life.

New home duties now opened before Teresa, in the midst of which she would often retire to the house of her uncle, in the quiet and solitude of which

she found her greatest happiness. The little room in which she had assisted at her first Mass, had been converted into an oratory, and here Teresa would pass hours in intimate union and converse with her divine Saviour, who, although imperceptibly, was drawing her ever closer to Himself. This constant union with God did not, however, in any way prevent her from shedding a charm of brightness and joy over the house and the declining years of the venerable Curé. Thus passed the next few years of the life of Teresa Chappuis, in the midst of family joys and filial duties. But those around her already foresaw the sacrifice which awaited them, for it was evident to all that God had special designs over the pure soul of this young girl.

CHAPTER SECOND.

SHE ENTERS THE NOVICIATE OF THE VISITATION AT FRIBOURG IN SWITZERLAND (1811).

TERESA had long felt an interior desire to consecrate herself to God in the cloister. In order to assure herself as to the divine will, she proposed to

undertake a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Einsiedeln, situated about seventy-five miles from Soyhières, and there consult the Blessed Virgin on the subject of her vocation. Her parents, though fearing somewhat for her health, which was at that time extremely delicate, felt interiorly that it was the will of God she should undertake the pilgrimage, and gave their consent, committing her to the charge of three women of the village. After a long and fatiguing journey, which, according to the pious custom of the times, was performed on foot, the pilgrims arrived at Einsiedeln, at the time when the evening Angelus was ringing. The sight of the splendid Abbey, with its magnificent monuments and rich ornamentation, together with the solemnity of its services, made an indelible impression on Teresa. A feeling of joy, mingled with admiration and gratitude, filled her heart; and Our Lady, who never fails to hear the prayer of those who go to her with child-like confidence, granted the fervent pilgrim all the light that she had come to seek in her sanctuary.

On her return home, she made known to her parents the determination she had taken of entering some

religious order at once. But the fatigues of the journey, and her grief for the loss of her brother, had told seriously upon her already delicate health, and her parents hesitated to give their consent. The doctor was consulted, and declared that change of air was absolutely necessary. Teresa took advantage of this, to obtain leave to go to Fribourg. It was in the month of June, 1811, at the hour of Vespers, that she arrived at the convent. On beholding the walls of the enclosure, so profound a sadness overwhelmed her soul, that she was on the point of returning with her mother to Soyhières. She decided, however, to remain, but the intense longing desire to return to her native land increased, and became so strong, and at the same time, her soul was plunged in a sea of such bitter interior trial and desolation, that believing she was not where God willed her to be, she finally determined to leave the convent. No sooner, however, had she returned home than another fear seized her. Was she doing the will of God, or was she not rather doing her own? Was she not, like Jonas, fleeing from the face of the Lord? Such and similar questions were constantly presenting themselves to her mind. This interior conflict continued

during the three following years, which Teresa passed in the midst of her family ; and it was all the more painful, as our Lord seemed to hide Himself behind an obscure cloud, and all the interior lights and graces which He had hitherto bestowed upon her, were now withdrawn. But the hour of deliverance was at hand. One day when she was praying fervently in her favorite resort, the sanctuary of Our Lady of Forbourg, she felt once more interiorly enlightened, and understood that it was the will of God that she should return to Fribourg. She lost no time in making the necessary preparations, and on the twenty-first of November, 1814, the generous young girl once more quitted the home of her childhood, to go where her Lord called her. She was accompanied by her elder brother and sister, and followed by the regrets and affection of the whole village.

On arriving at the convent gates, a mortal agony again seized her, and, as though to prove the fidelity of His handmaid, our Lord once more withdrew His sensible grace, and for a brief moment a cloud of sorrow and darkness overshadowed her soul. Scarcely, however, had she crossed the threshold,

and heard the enclosure door lock behind her, than all her repugnances vanished, and she was filled with interior light and joy. "It is over!" she exclaimed, as she entered the parlor where her brother was anxiously awaiting her; "I am now a Religious for ever!" The mistress of novices was not long in discovering the treasure which had been confided to her care, and she foretold that this young girl would be one of the lights and pillars of the Order.

In the following June, Teresa was clothed with the religious habit, and received the name of Mary Francis de Sales, names expressive of her devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and of her ardent and filial love for St. Francis of Sales, of whom she was wont to say: "Everything in our holy Founder pleases me; not only does he satisfy my reason, but he charms my heart and my inclinations." As we study her after-life, we shall see that this veneration was not merely a passing enthusiasm, but a life-long devotion. Not only the doctrine of St. Francis of Sales, which she constantly studied in his works, but even his manner of speaking, of acting, and of judging; his dealings with others; his direction of souls; and, above all, his manner of communicating with

God : all these traits of the great Saint of Geneva were admirably reproduced in Mother Mary de Sales.

The young novice now commenced that work of interior and exterior formation which is the foundation and basis of all religious perfection. She began by penetrating herself with the spirit of the Directory, a little book composed by St. Francis of Sales for the spiritual direction of his children. The Constitutions give rules for the exterior life, the nature of the various exercises, and the times for practising them. The Directory assigns to each exercise a thought or an intention. The Constitutions therefore, form the exterior, or the body ; the Directory, the interior, or the soul, of the religious exercises. A well-trained soldier performs instinctively, as it were, and without any effort, the most complicated manœuvres : even so a Religious of the Visitation, when formed to her Directory, enters upon a path of confidence, simplicity and peace, which aid her marvellously in the accomplishment of all the obligations of her state. Sister Mary de Sales, therefore, entered on this way with a firm and generous will, nor was she ever known to hesitate in giving to God whatever He asked of her.

This constant unswerving fidelity merited for her so great an increase of interior joy and light, that she seemed a stranger to all that passed around her in the house. Her interior training, however, prevented her in no way from being always present at the call of duty and the Rule, to which she adjusted her entire being.

On the ninth of June, 1816, the fervent novice had the happiness of pronouncing the three vows of religion. During the ceremony her soul was filled with spiritual joy and consolation, and she experienced an increase of grace and strength in God. It is a pious custom in Convents of the Visitation for the sister, when prostrate under the pall, to ask of God all the graces which she desires for her family and friends, and finally, whatever she considers most necessary for herself in the state of life that she has chosen. Holy profession being considered a truly heroic act, it is piously believed that God would never refuse any grace asked for at that moment by the newly professed. Many of the pupils and friends of the house therefore, being anxious that their intentions may not be forgotten, give notes on which they are written, to be laid by her under the

pall, so that she may recommend them altogether fervently to God.

Sister Mary de Sales did not forget any of those whom she had known and loved. For herself, however, she asked but one grace, and that was, never to be the object of the natural love of any one. This heroic act proved the generosity of her love for God; and her prayer was heard and granted, to the great advantage of all who had the happiness of living afterwards under her guidance. No one in the convent was more universally loved than this good Mother; it would be impossible for anyone to inspire more respect and confidence, or a more profound attachment and devotedness; but the sincere affection, which all felt for her, took away nothing of that love which she owed to God, or her sense of His divine Presence.

Scarcely a year had elapsed since her profession, when she was sent by her Superiors to Metz, to cooperate in the re-establishment of the convent of the Visitation in that town. The change from the spacious and well-regulated cloister of Fribourg was great, and our young sister felt it keenly, but she exclaimed: "Where would be the merit of obe-

dience, if it did not impose sacrifices?" The want of space and air, however, combined with the many inevitable privations of a newly founded community, told seriously upon the delicate health of Sister Mary de Sales, and a violent fever soon reduced her to the last extremity. Her Superiors were alarmed, and hastened to recall her to Fribourg. Once again the Blessed Virgin came to the assistance of her beloved child. On the eve of her departure from Metz, Sister Mary de Sales, with the sanction of her Mother Superior, made a vow to Our Lady of Forbourg, that if God restored her to health, she would engage one of her brothers to make a pilgrimage to Forbourg in her name. Scarcely had she uttered the vow, when she felt herself suddenly cured, and was able to start on her long and tedious journey the following day.

On her return to Fribourg, she was charged with the care of the noviciate. Though still young, this fervent mistress possessed the secret of expanding the hearts of her novices, and at the same time, enacting from them a perfect fidelity to all the rules. "Neither more nor less than the rule prescribes"—such was her device and constant practice. Before she en-

tered upon her charge, our Lord assured her that He would Himself make choice of His spouses, and that He would not permit any to be admitted whom He had not predestined for Himself. This promise of her divine Master was fulfilled in a marvellous manner, for, during the many years that she was either mistress of novices or superior, not one was known to quit the religious habit and return to the world.

CHAPTER THIRD.

SISTER MARY DE SALES IS NAMED SUPERIORESS OF THE MONASTERY OF TROYES (1826).

THE Convent of the Visitation at Troyes, in France, was founded in the year 1631. During the Revolution of 1789, the Sisters were forced to leave their enclosure, and seek shelter in different houses of the city, where they were dependent for their daily bread on the work of their hands or on alms, for the revolutionists had seized all they possessed, even the sacred vessels of the sanctuary. The many privations and terrors of that fearful time tended to

shorten the life of many among them; and when, in 1807, they returned to their convent, they were only fifteen in number. The house, although two-thirds in ruins, had been re-purchased and restored to them through the munificence of a friend; and their fidelity in remaining united during all the horrors and misfortunes of the Revolution, had drawn down upon them many and signal graces. Soon after their return, several of the nuns from the convent of Beaune joined their sisters at Troyes, bringing with them not only some church vestments, which they had succeeded in saving from the hands of the Revolutionists, but also the true religious spirit with which they were themselves animated. It was not long before some young ladies of the best families of the neighborhood were led by the Holy Spirit to ask admission into the noviciate.

There was but one thing now wanting to complete the happiness of this fervent little band, and that was a Superior who, having been brought up in a house of strict observance, would be able to guide them with a sure hand, in the way traced out by their holy Founders. Many and fervent, therefore, were the prayers and penances which they offered to

obtain this grace, and God heard their petition. One day when Sister Mary de Sales was wrapt in prayer, our Lord gave her to understand that He was about to call her to serve Him at a distance from Fribourg. Thus it was that this good Mother was destined by Providence to re-establish the perfect observance of the rule in the community of Troyes, which had undergone so many trials and sufferings.

Ever since the return of Sister Mary de Sales to Fribourg, she had been a constant invalid, and unable to digest any solid food ; nevertheless, in spite of her delicate health, and although so young, her superiors, guided by the Spirit of God, acceded to the earnest entreaties of the sisters of Troyes, and consented to her being elected superioress of that house. Scarcely had she started on her long journey thither than she felt her health completely restored, and, to the surprise of those who accompanied her, was able to take solid food, which she had been so long unable to do. This she regarded as another sign and proof of the divine Will. On the way she stopped at Annecy, the first house of the Visitation, where, kneeling at the shrines of St. Francis of Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, Founders of the

Order, she received an interior light by which she foresaw, not only all she would have to do at Troyes, but also the special work awaiting her in each individual soul. This grace was again repeated at the sanctuary of Notre Dame-du-Chêne, about seven miles distant from Troyes, and strength was given to her from above for the work she was about to undertake. "It was there," she said, "that I received the most light, and was animated with the greatest confidence." It was on the first of June, 1826, that she reached Troyes, where she was welcomed as one sent by God. On the following day, the Bishop, Monseigneur des Hons, confirmed her election, and in this first visit, his Lordship gave to the young superioress his full and entire confidence, a confidence which he continued until the end of his life, consulting her even in all the more difficult affairs of his diocese. As for the sisters, they were all penetrated with a sentiment of profound respect for the Mother whom Providence had sent them. "See," exclaimed the younger ones, "see what it is to be a Religious! Oh! how beautiful it is to be such as our holy Founder wishes we should be!" Her countenance habitually wore an expression of

profound recollection, mingled with an air of piety, so sweet and attractive, that the sisters were charmed. When she returned from prayer, this expression assumed something quite imposing and heavenly, which inspired devotion and interior recollection among all those with whom she came in contact. To this powerful attractiveness of her virtue and her fidelity to the practices of the religious life, was joined that ascendancy which her profound knowledge of the interior life gave her.

The soundness of her judgments, combined with a wonderful clearness of mind, straightforwardness and strength of will, led her instinctively to reach her end by the shortest way, without ever allowing herself to be influenced by any consideration beyond that of duty. She commenced therefore by gaining the hearts of her sisters in order to lead them to a more loving and child-like obedience and submission. "Ah, my daughters," she would say, "how easy it is to fall a victim to self-love! And yet our holy Founder wishes us to be strong and firm. Cut short, therefore, all the threads of your own will, and then you will be able to fly in the way of obedience."

This was at first no easy matter, for many of those

good old sisters, having been compelled to think and act for themselves during the fifteen years they had passed in the world, had acquired a certain spirit of independence, and an inclination to pass judgment upon everything that went on around them. But the hand chosen by Providence for the work of transformation, was holy and well suited to the task; and it was not long before the heart and will of each one were enclosed in those of her superioress. God, Who never allows Himself to be out-done in generosity, granted them in return a superabundance of interior and exterior graces; and the convent of Troyes, under the rule of the good Mother, might be likened to the celebrated Abbey of Clairvaux, during the lifetime of St. Bernard. There, as at Clairvaux, the inmates experienced ineffable joys, and received extraordinary lights, and there God manifested Himself and conversed familiarly with many of the sisters. Encouraged by the advice, but still more by the example of their Mother, the community advanced with giant strides in the way of perfection, and strict observance of the rule. The sweet odor of the virtues practised within the enclosure of the Visitation could not long remain hidden, and very

soon persons of every rank and condition sought counsel and advice of the good Mother. Monseigneur des Hons, bishop of Troyes, undertook nothing of importance without first consulting her; and used to say: "Your prayers, my good Mother, give me courage." Many of the priests of the diocese likewise had recourse to her, and they all affirmed that the union of their prayers with those of Mother Mary de Sales was the most efficacious means for obtaining strength, courage, and success in their ministry. In truth, she was not destined to be a light placed on the candlestick of the Visitation only, but it was to shed its soft and gentle rays over a multitude of souls living in the world, as well as in the ecclesiastical or religious state. To persons of the world she generally recommended, first of all, the practice of the commandments of God and of the Church; but what she urged most strongly was, fidelity to the duties of their state of life.

It was the year 1830; serious events were taking place in France; Charles the Tenth had been dethroned, and Louis Philippe enthroned in his place. The good Mother, to whom all this had been previously revealed by our Lord, consoled and com-

forted all who came to her, in their fears and anxieties for the future, assuring them that the religious houses would not be disturbed, that war would not break out, and that the clergy need have no fear of having to suffer persecution from the Revolutionists.

Her vigilance and solicitude for the peace of her daughters was, however, so great, that during the whole of that eventful year, the Community, with the exception of one or two sisters, whose duties brought them into inevitable contact with the outer world, remained in happy ignorance of the agitated state of the country, and their habitual calm and union with God were in no way disturbed. About this time, the good Mother undertook the construction of a large and spacious wing, for the accommodation of the school, which was frequented by the daughters of all the first families of the town and neighborhood. Many of the friends of the house looked upon this as an act of imprudence, at a time when the worst passions of the nation were striving for the mastery, and France was threatened with serious internal troubles; but placing all her confidence in God, she calmly continued her work. The building finished, several new regulations were

made to counteract certain abuses, which, owing to the past religious and social troubles, had imperceptibly crept in, to the detriment of conventual observance. As in every work which is undertaken for the glory of God, the cross is a seal and sign of the blessing of heaven, so in this it was not wanting to Mother Mary de Sales. But to all the opposition which arose from outside, she invariably answered: "We must seek first the kingdom of God and His glory, and everything else will be added to us in abundance. The kingdom of God for us consists in the observance of our Rules and Constitutions, from which we should never deviate." Her confidence was not misplaced, for after a few years, the school became more flourishing and the number of pupils larger than ever. No doubt, in the wonderful designs of Providence, this period which, though not wanting in many trials and privations, was nevertheless abundant in spiritual graces, was necessary to establish the sisters more firmly in the practice of the religious and the interior life, after which they had so long and ardently sighed.

The term, however, which, according to a rule laid down by St. Francis of Sales, limits the duration of

the superiority to six years, had now expired ; and on the election of a new superior, Mother Mary de Sales was named Mistress of Novices. The following year, at the earnest solicitations of the sisters of the second convent of the Visitation in Paris, she was sent thither by her Superiors, and remained there as Mistress of Novices for six months. "Here as at Troyes," wrote the sisters, "every word and action of this saintly Religious bore the impress of divine grace." The community was renewed in fervor and religious observance. The spirit of St. Francis of Sales animated the hearts of all, exciting them to an ever-increasing love of the life hidden with Christ in God. Through our Saviour the way was open, the narrow way of love and sacrifice, which perfects and consummates the work of God in the soul.

In 1838, she was elected Superioress of the second Convent of Paris, to the inexpressible grief of the community of Troyes, where she had been holding the reins of government since the year 1835.

The good Mother, who had an ardent love and respect for all which concerns the honor and service of God, had long felt an intense desire to restore the convent church, whose aspect of poverty filled her

with grief. As was her custom, she had awaited the expression of the Divine Will to put her plan into execution and raise an altar more suitable and worthy of the supreme Majesty. Shortly after her return, however, the necessary means, which had hitherto failed, having been furnished by Providence, the good Mother understood that it was the moment destined by God for her to commence the work. The preliminary steps were consequently taken, but when the measurements were being made, it was found that the walls of the convent were in a most unsafe condition, several beams being split, and the foundations had in some places literally crumbled away. It was therefore necessary to put props in every direction so as to ensure the safety of the Community during the time of anxiety and incertitude which ensued. As the reconstruction of the house would be attended, not only by excessive dangers, but also entail expenses far beyond the resources of the Community, it was thought advisable to make efforts to sell the convent, and that the Community, which was numerous, should seek refuge elsewhere. All the negotiations, however, failed at the last moment ; and, as though God wished to try

the confidence of His faithful servant to the utmost, a part of the premises, including the kitchen and store-rooms, was at that time taken by the city officials for a road, the construction of which had been in project over sixty years. The distress and agony of the good Mother were indescribable. "We can indeed now say to God," she exclaimed, "Our Father, who art in heaven, we have no home." On the twenty-ninth of June, a ray of hope inspired her with fresh courage, but it was soon to be overshadowed, and she said to her sisters at the afternoon assembly: "St. Peter has brought us a heavy stone." (St. Pierre nous a apporté une lourde pierre.) Nevertheless, she continued to exert every effort in order to assure the future good of the Community, but she did nothing without being guided by light from above.

At last, after two years of prayer and anxious suspense, the good Mother no longer doubted that it was the will of God she should commence the great work of reconstruction, which was to bring with it so many unforeseen difficulties. Now, indeed, more than ever had she to place her entire confidence in God, in order not to be cast down or discouraged.

"We must," she said, "consider all as coming from God; we must think of the God of the house, and not of the house." The workmen were therefore called in, and portion after portion of the falling building was consolidated or rebuilt, without any accident.

On the eighth of December, 1842, feast of the Immaculate Conception, the convent and church, in which two new altars had been erected, were finished, and a solemn Te Deum was sung by the Community in thanksgiving for their wonderful preservation, and also for all the known and unknown graces of those years of trial.

"There are many more that we do not know, than what we do know," said the good Mother to her sisters; then, turning towards the new altar, she continued: "It is already four years since God asked for this altar, and we had to wait until to-day, to present it to him: this shows us that we must not be in a hurry to act, but await the moments of God."

During all this time of anxiety and exterior occupation, the interior work of souls had in no way been neglected by this vigilant superior. Each sister be-

held in her Mother, the representative of God, and the visible expression of His Will, and all willingly conformed themselves to her every desire. "Our Mother was not only animated by the Spirit of God," asserts Sister Marie Stephanie Guernet, Assistant of the Community, "of which her every word and action was a proof, but she possessed so intimate a knowledge of souls, and of what was passing in them, that one may say she saw them as well as if she held them in her hand. This inspired everyone with so much confidence that, on leaving our Mother, one felt as though one had been with our Lord Himself." There was nothing remarkable about her; nevertheless her whole exterior portrayed the sanctity of a soul that holds converse with God. She was invariably the same, always bright and gay, dispensing life and joy to all around her. The Holy Spirit had given her a clear and precise insight into the spirit of her holy Founder, and, like him, she knew how to render the practice of virtue, sweet and easy; to bring souls to forget themselves, and to hover round their Saviour, in order to study and imitate His life and virtues.

Her intimate union with God, and child-like

dependence upon Him, were remarkable, not only in interior, but also in exterior matters. She took an interest in every detail, and so little did she appear embarrassed, that one would have imagined she was acquainted with every kind of work.

The result was the same at Paris as at Troyes. Persons of every position in life came to seek her advice, and that not only on matters of importance, for many priests and superiors of Religious Communities never undertook the most trivial business without having first consulted Mother Mary de Sales. Monseigneur de Quélen, Archbishop of Paris, held her in profound veneration, and often visited her to ask her prayers and advice. The death of this noble confessor of the Faith was a blow all the more painful to her, as with him the last link in that chain which bound her to the traditions in which she had been brought up, seemed to be severed.

Monseigneur des Hons, Bishop of Troyes, never went to Paris without visiting and consulting the good Mother. "God," he said, "has removed the candle; I must therefore come here in order to see clearly." The name of the good Mother even

reached the Court, and Queen Marie Amélie sent one of her Maids of Honor to ask the prayers of the worthy Superioress for herself and her children.

Again, how many good and fervent priests owed, as they themselves confessed on many occasions, not only their own spiritual advancement, but also that of those under their care, after God, to the advice and prayers of this holy Superioress? She was in truth the Mother and friend of all. Timid souls found in her the tender charity and compassion of the Sacred Heart; and her decisions, always clear and concise, were for them their surest stay.

Those, on the contrary, who were energetic and decided, saw in her a General marching at their head, exciting them to fight bravely, and leading them on to victory. The children and grand-children of the numerous friends of the convent were to her, so to say, as her own; the younger ones were always brought to her to be blessed. Whatever she then said concerning the future of these little ones, was regarded as prophetic, and carefully noted down with the most religious respect; nor did her words ever once fail to be realized.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE GOOD MOTHER AND THE WORK OF EDUCATION.

In the year 1844, we find the good Mother again at the head of the community of Troyes. Hitherto we have considered her as mistress of novices, as superioress, and as counsellor of persons living in the world. We will now contemplate her in the work of education.

Although, according to the first intention of its holy Founder, the Order, strictly speaking, is not a teaching Order; nevertheless, in his usual breadth of spirit, St. Francis of Sales did not absolutely refuse the admission of children into his houses, and during his lifetime young girls were admitted for education under certain conditions. They wore a little habit planned by the holy Bishop himself, and went by the name of "Sisters of the Little Habit." By degrees their numbers increased, and thus it was that these "Little Sisters," or Aspirants to the religious life, prepared the way for the systematic

schools, which gradually increased and flourished during the lifetime of the first members of the Order.

Mother Mary de Sales understood that the main object of the Visitation schools should be to assist the Church by bringing up women imbued with a truly Christian spirit, which, at that time was, as it still is, so greatly needed. She gave herself therefore wholly to the work. Her first and principal care was to arrange every detail in such a manner that the quiet and recollection of the community should in no way suffer from the contact with this little world; and that the school should not interfere with the cloisteral observance. It was therefore, as are the schools of all the convents of the Visitation, so entirely shut off from the convent, that those sisters who were not employed in it knew nothing of what went on there, and were ignorant even as to the number of pupils or their names. Her next care was for the material necessities and health of the children committed to her care: "We must not allow such things," she would say, "to stand in the way of their going to God." For it was to lead them to God that she wished to have pupils; it was

in order to guide them in the way of sanctification, through the means offered by St. Francis of Sales, that she desired to unite under her roof those young children who, later on, would carry his spirit into their families and into the world. The influence of the good Mother over the pupils extended itself to everything which concerned them. She understood how to guide their tastes and wills, and inspire them with sentiments of faith and piety, the love of work and study, and a desire for all that is beautiful, noble, and generous. Her idea was to exercise them in the virtues which they would be called upon to practise in the world, and to regulate their habits of piety according to the circumstances in which they would be thrown in after-life. "You will have nothing to change," she often said to them; "remain as you are." And again: "It is God's Will that we should save our souls; that we should be good towards those with whom we live; and that we should preserve whatever He has given us for our own use, or for that of others. We shall have to render an account to God of material as well as of spiritual goods, because all proceed equally from the goodness of His Heart towards us. The great science is to know

how to refer all to Him, and to receive all from Him. . . . . It is of God that we should take counsel with regard to the choice of a state of life; and the place to hear His answer is on our death-bed, whither we should transport ourselves in spirit, and then consider what we should wish to have done at such a moment."

The good Mother was wont to affirm that the residence of pupils in a regular convent, where they see nothing but what is most edifying, has a considerable influence over their education. "This was the thought of our holy Founder," she said, "when he established our 'Little Sisters,' many of whom consecrated themselves to God in religion, while others became distinguished women in Society." "They have," she continued, "all the benefit of the religious life, without its obligations; . . . they can there fortify and prepare themselves for the life which lies before them." "The pupils of the Visitation hold their place everywhere," says Cardinal Mermillod, "they may be found in every grade of society, carrying out the ideal of a Christian woman. They are neither above nor beneath anything. They attain equally the two extremities of every

situation, and are as admirable, as great, and as complete in the most humble as in the highest ranks of society." Again, according to Pope Pius the Ninth, and several distinguished Cardinals and Bishops :— "The pupils of the Visitation are formed in the spirit of St. Francis of Sales to be women capable of all positions in life, accustomed to the love of duty, finding their happiness in the midst of their families, and incapable of letting themselves be drawn away from the domestic circle by the amusements and frivolities of the world ; courageous women, who know how to find all that is wanting to their hearts where God has placed them ; and who, in their Faith and habitual self-sacrifice, possess all that is necessary to satisfy themselves and fulfil the mission which is confided to them."

Such were the pupils formed by the good Mother; and on her death-bed she expressed a wish that the convent of Troyes should continue this work, which had been visibly blessed by God during so many years. The thought that in after years the school might possibly be closed, was the only thing which troubled her in that hour, although she was so calm and confident with regard to all her other works.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

HER INTERIOR LIFE.

DURING the whole course of her religious life, the good Mother was alternately either Superioress or mistress of novices. The gifts of grace necessary for these important offices were to be found in abundance in her, for she drew largely from the charity of the Sacred Heart that cordiality which formed the basis of her whole being. "I have always considered Mother Mary de Sales as a saint," says the Abbé Seignier, one of her confessors. "More than once I have been in a position to judge that she received supernatural lights from God. Her aptitude for the government of the house was marvellous, and it was easy to see that God acted with her and for her. I never heard but one opinion from all who knew her, namely, that she was a saintly soul, adorned with heavenly gifts." The special aim of the good Mother, from the commencement of her religious life, had been to conform herself to all the exigences of the Rule, to make them

familiar to, and identify them with, herself to such a degree that they became, as it were, a second nature to her. On first awaking in the morning, she would cast her whole soul into God, and immediately entered into communion with the Divine Majesty. She had no need to have recourse to any effort of thought, for God came in advance of His servant, and, showing her the work of the day, inspired her at the same time with an ardent desire to devote herself to it. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass was the most important exercise of her day ; it was during this exercise that she held the most intimate communion with God, and received from Him the highest and greatest lights. It often happened that during Mass our Lord revealed to her special circumstances concerning the Church, the community, or the souls of individual persons under her care. At the express command of her Superior, the Bishop of Fribourg, she communicated daily. Her thanksgiving was an act of silent contemplation, while with her whole being, she adored Him whom she had received under the sacramental species. We read in the book of Exodus, that Moses, on descending from the mountain, bore on his countenance signs

of his interview with God; even so the historian of the good Mother asserts, that after her thanksgiving she appeared wholly transfigured, and her countenance gave testimony of the converse she held with her God.

We cannot do better than cite a few words of instruction, given by this fervent Superior to the Sisters, for, in them we behold a reflection of her own life and interior dispositions. "People ask," she said, "what manner of life ours is. The human mind sees nothing in it; it is considered too easy, too ordinary, to possess any merit, since it consists principally in attending choir, going to the refectory, or taking part in recreation. This, they say, is very little, and leads to nothing great. Yes, truly, it is but very little for the proud spirit; it is nothing for the spirit of vanity; but for those who are enlightened from above, it is a great thing to practise from moment to moment all the different virtues which present themselves; it is a great thing to lead a supernatural life while performing the most ordinary actions. In our manner of life, there is nothing of the creature, consequently everything is of God. If there were more of the creature, our life would be

better understood; but it would be infinitely less in the eyes of God . . . Our life is hidden, it is hidden even from ourselves; hence, there is no satisfaction for nature to be derived from it, but it is known by God, and beloved by His Sacred Heart. We arrive at this life only by means of a dependence on Him from minute to minute, and by a continual renouncement of ourselves. We must separate ourselves from our every inclination and affection, and hold ourselves above our own views and sentiments. Had our holy Founder discovered a more perfect manner of life, or one more suited to unite us with God, he would have given it to us. He knew well what price God sets upon a life passed in continual self-renunciation, dependence, and subjection, from moment to moment." Again: "Charity is the fruit of prayer; the love of God is necessary to enable us to love our neighbor in a supernatural manner. . . . If we think we make our prayer well and have not true sisterly charity, our prayer is nothing but illusion and self-love. . . . Charity is there, where we are not ourselves. God is love, and he who dwells in charity, dwells in God."

Charity was one of the divine perfections which

the good Mother most frequently contemplated, and God had perhaps destined her to understand better than many others the mysteries of Divine Love. Naturally good-hearted, she seized with an exquisite delicacy all that savored of love or devotedness; she seemed to be all heart towards those with whom she had to deal; but, when it concerned God, her whole being was in its element, and she would plunge and lose herself in the ocean of divine Love. She saw God everywhere, and in everything, aspiring after and breathing only for Him. Her life may be said to have been one continued canticle of love. That which sustained the fidelity of Mother Mary de Sales, during the whole course of her religious life, in which nature had no part, was assuredly her ardent love for God, and at the same time, a constant interior feeling that her Lord was preparing a work by means of which He would give effect to the treasures of His love in a way and measure which He had hitherto not manifested. "I have in God," she said, "a first view, but this view will be expanded by means of those whom He will call to enter on this way and communicate it to others. I receive the first effects, but they will partake of all the

other effects of the charity contained in this *way*, and will apply them to others." She felt that she could not neglect the smallest practice of correspondence to the movements of grace, without failing seriously towards God; since those for whom she was preparing the way were to be the means of a signal manifestation of the mercy of God over the world. "This is what God makes known to me," she used to say to her confessor, to whom she gave a minute account of all that passed between her and God; "but the effects are left to you and others; and it is you who will have to spread them abroad." It was thus that in 1849 she clearly foresaw and foretold the great work of her life, viz., the establishment of the congregation of priests, Oblates of Saint Francis of Sales, which was founded by her in 1869.

Another of the divine perfections which ravished her was the fidelity of God. God is faithful, and can neither deceive, nor be deceived. She would often call to mind attentively all the promises made to her by God, and the graces she had received from Him; and her most ardent desire was to repay Him by a reciprocal fidelity, from moment to moment, while her bitterest regrets were for the smallest fault in which

the slightest trace of infidelity was perceptible. The whole life of this good Mother may be summed up in this one title, "the faithful servant," or better still, "the faithful friend of her Saviour."

When about to speak in chapter or elsewhere, she was wont to recollect herself for a moment or so, and it was evident that she then cast herself wholly into God, and this was her only preparation ; after which, she would speak with an admirable facility, for it was her Master who then communicated His light and His unction to others through her.

Everyone present felt it, and bore testimony to the same effect, and, on leaving these conferences, the sisters were, so to speak, enveloped in the light of God. The words of their Mother were engraven all the more profoundly in their hearts as they were the daily witnesses of the many wonders of grace obtained by her ; for God seemed to grant everything to her prayers, both with regard to spiritual and temporal graces. "What an air of holiness had Mother Mary de Sales," writes one ; "what modesty, what union with God! Her look penetrated the very depths of the soul ; one felt the most profound respect in her presence, and none left her without

being enlightened, consoled, encouraged, strengthened, and filled with a sweet and holy peace."

And again: "In the midst of her numerous occupations she beheld only God, referred all to Him, and went to Him with the simplicity and confidence of a child, asking with filial love for everything she wanted. It was thus that all prospered in her hands, and the blessing of God rested visibly on her every undertaking. Liberal by nature, the great heart of Mother Mary de Sales delighted in giving; she gave to God and to her neighbor with an admirable delicacy and generosity; never counting the cost, and wishing, if possible, that her sacrifices should remain unknown, not only to others, but even to herself. She carried this spirit into the most difficult points of her interior life, and, after the example of her holy Founder, she refused herself all consideration as to its sweetness or bitterness. Her attraction was to approve of, and rejoice in all that God sent or permitted. Her spirit of faith and detachment removed from her mind all attention to self; she offered up to God all her pains and crosses, casting the eyes of her soul upon the divine Hand, in order to follow its guidance. As for herself, her principal object was to

forget and consider herself as nothing; she undertook this practice of generosity in the commencement of her religious life, and persevered in it to the end.

The increase of faith, hope, and charity became daily more and more perceptible in the good Mother, and, to speak only of the latter, she was never known to do or say the smallest thing contrary to the love of God or her neighbor. Her principal devotion consisted in the contemplation of her Saviour, in all the mysteries of His Life and Passion. In all she said, wrote, or did, she had but one aim, to become one with Him; and this union of the good Mother with her divine Spouse was constant and complete.

A true daughter of the Church, all the practices and ceremonies of this good Mother were dear to her heart. She had a special devotion to holy water, and always took some with her on her different journeys. She inspired everyone with confidence in its efficacy against illness and accidents, and in times of contagious sickness, she had some put into the food. Twice too, the Convent was preserved from fire by the use of holy water. Another devotion of which the good Mother made almost as frequent

use, was that of blessed salt. "Blessed salt," she would say, "strengthens us against the temptations of the devil; it gives wisdom to our resolutions; it is most efficacious in establishing and maintaining peace, and preserves the vigor of body and soul. She had some put into all the food which was served in the house, and strongly exhorted others to do the same. She also recommended the frequent use of blessed candles, and always had one lighted during storms, or any kind of epidemic. We have already seen how great a devotion she had to pilgrimages, several of which she re-animated by her zeal and encouragement. Devotion to the Holy Souls had also a large part in her acts of piety. We can merely refer here to her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and the most holy Virgin; her zeal in propagating devotion to Our Lady among the pupils of the monastery; her constant recourse to the "Faithful Virgin," the erection of the confraternity of "Our Lady of Good Counsel;" her devotion to Relics, Patron Saints, and the Guardian Angels; her respect for, and devotion to the religious state, etc.

She used to say that the religious life is a continuation of that of our Saviour, whom she venerated

in the different characteristics of each Order of the Church. Finally, the good Mother had a special attraction for childhood ; she loved children, and placed great confidence in their prayers. If a father or mother came to consult her, she would say : " Make your little children pray ; the Child Jesus can refuse them nothing."

CHAPTER SIXTH.

HER EXTERIOR WORKS.

THE study of the lives of the saints furnishes us with innumerable proofs of the infinite goodness of God towards man, and His constantly renewed efforts to win the love of His creatures, through the medium of holy souls, to whom in different ages of the Church's history, He has been pleased to manifest Himself in the silence and seclusion of the cloister. Take, for instance, a St. Catherine of Sienna, a St. Agnes of Monte Pulciano, a St. Magdalen of Pazzi, a St. Teresa, with others too numerous to mention ; so in the Visitation, among many others, we find a Blessed Margaret Mary, the apostle and confidante of the Sacred Heart ; and an Anne

Magdalen Remuzat, the privileged spouse of Jesus; each of whom had her special mission in the Church of God. In like manner, Mother Mary de Sales was destined to be a channel of graces, not only to the garden of St. Francis of Sales, to pour into the souls of his daughters the graces issuing from the Sacred Humanity of the Saviour, but she was to dispense the waters of divine Mercy far beyond the walls of her convent. Through her means, the love of the Redeemer was to be manifested to countless souls scattered over the whole world.

About the year 1836, the Abbé de Malet, a saintly priest of Paris, founded a home for orphan girls, where they received a Christian education, and were gratuitously provided with food, and all the helps and instructions necessary to prepare them for their state of life in the world. He placed the house under the direction of several devout persons, whom he had assembled together under the name of "Saint Mary of Loretto."

At that time, the Abbé de Malet was director of Mother Mary de Sales, for whom he felt the highest esteem, and in all the difficulties of his newly founded congregation, he applied to her for help and counsel,

so much so, that before long, no plan was undertaken or carried out without her having been first consulted, and she soon found herself wholly charged with the direction of the little house of Saint Mary of Loretto.

After the death of its Founder, in 1843, M. l'Abbé Beaussier, his spiritual son and successor in the work, confided the same, with all its interests, both spiritual and temporal, into the hands of the good Mother, and, to quote the words of the first Superioress of the Congregation, "it would be difficult to express the spiritual union which existed between ourselves and her, who for over forty years was our Mother and protectress, and who, before her death, completed the work that she had so constantly followed and protected, by uniting us with the Oblate Sisters of Saint Francis of Sales."

We next find the good Mother assisting in the establishment of the society of Saint Vincent of Paul, by means of which boys and youths, abandoned by their relatives, are brought up in the practice of their religion, taught a variety of trades, and enabled to gain an honest livelihood. Before taking the first steps in this great work, which has been blessed by

such happy results, its Founder consulted Mother Mary de Sales, who not only warmly encouraged the foundation, but took upon herself the responsibility of the temporal wants and the direction of the house.

In 1844, the good Mother, as we have seen, was recalled from the second convent of Paris, where she had lived as Superioress since 1838, in order to resume the reins of government at Troyes. About this time Monseigneur Debelay, bishop of Troyes, conceived the idea of establishing a house for diocesan priests, whose principal duty it would be to give missions, and otherwise assist the priests in their parish work. He unfolded his plan to Mother Mary de Sales, who not only greatly encouraged his idea, but helped him by her prayers and a large offering of money. "Perhaps," she said to herself, "this is the work God has shown me." The work was commenced under the most favorable auspices: it was blessed by God, and prospered. The good Mother may, to a certain extent, be regarded as its foundress, for it was she who furnished the money for the acquisition of the first house occupied by these priests.

But, although she constantly sustained them by her prayers and that material help which is so indispensable in the commencement of a foundation, whose only recourse is divine Providence; nevertheless, these were not the priests whom God foresaw would spread abroad the work of love destined for her by our Lord.

The ten years which followed 1848 were consecrated by the good Mother to the interior life and spiritual advancement of her community. It was during these years that our Lord prepared her in a special and definite manner for those works which she was to be instrumental in founding. These were accomplished in God, and with God, according to a plan so sure, and with such solid foundations, that she was heard to exclaim: "It is finished; God will not change His plan." "Dieu n'y reviendra pas."

One of the first in which she had a large part was the Association of Saint Francis of Sales, whose object is the defence and propagation of the faith in Christian lands. The idea was first conceived by Monseigneur de Ségur. Alarmed at the greatness of the enterprise, he took counsel of Mother Mary de Sales, who urged him to put his plan into execution,

assuring him that such was the divine Will. This sufficed for the holy priest, and in 1858, he wrote to the good Mother, begging her to use her influence to establish the society of Saint Francis of Sales in Troyes.

"This is a great work," she replied, but she gave herself heart and soul to it, foreseeing in the immense good which would result therefrom, the first-fruits of those graces which God had promised to her. By the authorization of the Bishop, Monseigneur Cœur, it was first established at the Visitation, and afterwards canonically recognized in the diocese; but the breath of the good Mother was necessary to give it life and movement. She was considerably helped in this by the pupils of the house, who inaugurated an association by means of which the work of Monseigneur de Ségur was propagated in the diocese. A circular letter was addressed every month to the former pupils, in which was given an exact account of all that was done by the association, with the wonders of grace which were produced in souls, and the favors obtained by the associates for themselves or their families. These accounts, followed by the repeated assurance of the good Mother,

that God would continue to bless the work, inspired all the members with zeal, and tended greatly to encourage its establishment in the different parishes. It must not be supposed, however, that all the important undertakings of this great work were inspired by the good Mother; it is, nevertheless, certain that its worthy and venerated founder had recourse to her in all difficulties or questions of importance. As for the good Mother, she received from God the assurance that the love of the Saviour was about to be still further made manifest to her.

During the Lent of 1857, her sufferings increased, and she affirmed that virtue would issue from the cross, by means of which a large number of souls would be saved. On the other hand, she was distressed at beholding the decrease of faith, and the rapidity with which ignorance and irreligion were gaining ground among the people. The confessor of the community and others would often represent to her these spiritual miseries, and ask her prayers for the young work-women, who constituted the greater part of the population of the town.

In Advent of the same year, the good Mother asked her Lord to make known His Will with regard

to the salvation of souls, and to lead those whom He had chosen for the purpose to enter upon this way of zeal and apostleship. The divine Master did not fail to make It known.

In the following year the Patronage or Home for young work-women was founded, and placed under the direction of a pious and zealous lady. We should go beyond the limits of this short life, if we were to enter into all the details of this most useful and interesting work, by means of which hundreds of young girls are brought up according to the spirit of Saint Francis of Sales in the practice of their faith, and, after having served an apprenticeship of some years, are not only qualified to fulfil the duties of that state of life to which they may be called, but are also armed to encounter, with honor, all the dangers and difficulties to which so many young people of their age and condition fall the victims.

As is generally the case in the commencement of every work destined to further the glory of God and the salvation of souls, innumerable difficulties presented themselves at the outset; but the good Mother prayed and placed her confidence in God, who soon inspired several pious ladies to devote

themselves to the work, and before long a second Patronage house was opened. The work was now solidly established, and continued to prosper.

We must not think, however, that while the good Mother was thus occupied in these exterior works, she neglected in any way the care of her community. So far from this being the case, her extraordinary capacity for work enabled her to take part in everything; and it may truly be said that she was even more than ever watchful and exact in the practice and maintenance of the spirit of her Institute.

She seemed to redouble her ardor for the smallest observances; and, if God called her visibly to the help of her neighbor, by means of works of which she was the source and soul, she was none the less attentive to protect her convent from every kind of distraction. On the one hand, we see works springing up, destined to continue and spread abroad the graces which God had bestowed upon her; on the other, we find the indefatigable laborer continuing the work of perfection in the souls of those specially confided to her care. But trials, the seal, as we have said, of the works of God, began to show themselves and form the cement that was to hold together

the foundations of the great edifice of which, under God, she was to be the architect.

As we have already seen, the Patronage for young girls was founded and entrusted to the care of pious and devoted ladies. But, as is too often the case, individual zeal soon cools, and at the approach of difficulties, discouragement takes its place. It became therefore necessary to put the Patronage under the superintendence of a religious community. But what congregation would be able to enter into the views, and embrace the spirit which the Foundress wished to bequeath to it? The Visitation alone would be capable of this; but the Visitation is a cloistered Order, and consequently, exterior works are impossible. Hence the thought suggested itself to establish a congregation, which, though differing from the Visitation, as regards the exterior rules, should nevertheless practise those of the spiritual Directory, and approach as near as possible to its spirit and regulations. This thought appeared all the more practical as Saint Francis of Sales commenced his Institute under the form of an uncloistered congregation, with the title of "Oblates of the Visitation of Holy Mary." This name of Oblates he had en-

graved on the foundation stone of their church at Annecy. Such was therefore the first thought of Saint Francis of Sales, and it was only through condescension to the desires of Monseigneur de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, that he consented to establish the rule of enclosure in the convents of the Visitation.

It is well known how largely this sacrifice of the holy Founder has been repaid. The enclosure has been the means whereby the Visitation has been enabled to preserve without difficulty its first spirit and traditions, and become, according to the Père de la Rivière, "a royal pearl in the diadem of the Church." The most ardent wish of the good Mother was that the spirit of Saint Francis of Sales should be communicated to as many souls as possible, and the means for attaining this was evidently by a congregation, the members of which, penetrating into the different grades of Society, could spread abroad the doctrine of the holy Doctor. It was therefore decided to commence the work. About this time, two young ladies obtained permission to make a retreat at the Visitation, in order to discover in the silence of prayer, the Will of God with regard to an interior

attraction which they had felt for some time to consecrate themselves to God in religion. The result of the retreat was, that they at once took the place of those who had hitherto been charged with the direction of the Patronage; and the good Mother took upon herself the responsibility of forming them to the religious life.

A few months had scarcely elapsed since the retreat of the two aspirants, when his Eminence Cardinal Mermillod, at that time bishop of Geneva, came on a visit to Monseigneur Ravinet, Bishop of Troyes, in order to beg him to establish in his diocese a congregation of ladies, who would live according to the spirit of Saint Francis of Sales, and have for object the religious instruction of Catholic youth. He added that when a certain number had been formed, some might be sent to his diocese; for "being the successor of the Bishop of Geneva," he said, "I ought to establish the spirit of that Saint in my diocese." The two Bishops decided to unfold their plan to Mother Mary de Sales, in whom Monseigneur Ravinet placed the greatest confidence. The good Mother said she believed the project to come from God, and promised to prepare and instruct any

subjects that presented themselves, adding, "this is already done, for there are two young ladies at the Patronage who are preparing for what your Lordship desires, and they can commence at once." Monseigneur Mermillod was delighted at seeing his idea thus realized, and proceeded to examine the two aspirants, to whom he gave the religious habit. He expressed a wish that they should be called Oblates of Saint Francis of Sales, assuring them that they were his true daughters, since on his death-bed, the holy prelate had foretold that there would one day be an intermediate Order in his religious family, which, being placed between the cloister and the world, would be charged to dispense to others the benefits of the spiritual life, and assist the priests by an apostleship of teaching and holy influence. This was precisely the same thought as the good Mother's. "The Lord wills," she said, "that I should be an apostle, and that apostles should be formed from what He gives me."

The ceremony of the clothing was the first consecration of the Congregation of Oblates. It was thus founded exteriorly ; all that was now necessary was the firm establishment of the spiritual founda-

tion. The good Mother therefore gave the sisters in charge to the sister Assistant of the Visitation, who, being herself a model of observance, was well adapted to the formation in them of the interior life according to the spirit of her holy Founder.

By degrees others joined them, and the blessing of God rested visibly upon their house. The good Mother watched with pleasure the gradual development of their work, and supported them by her prayers. It was to these that they attributed the many graces and blessings which they received from God. . . . They were, however, very poor, and, being unable to buy wine, they made some themselves from the grapes which grew in their garden. This wine was put into a barrel, containing from fifty to sixty pints. The community was at the time composed of about twenty-five members, and every day wine for the whole household was drawn from this barrel. On being told of the fact, the good Mother said: "Be careful not to speak of it, or it will cease at once." The wine continued to flow thus for over eleven months.

The institution of the Oblates, however, began to give rise to certain rumors that the Mother Mary

de Sales was creating a new kind of Visitation. Accordingly the Superioress of the first house at Annecy despatched a prudent and judicious tourière, or out-sister, who, after seeing and judging for herself, would be able to bring her back an exact account of the dress and doings of the new Congregation.

The good Mother was deeply sensible of the delicate and truly sisterly manner in which the Mother Superior of Annecy had acted ; and she explained minutely to her envoy the duties and exercises of the Oblate sisters, who in no way resembled exteriorly the Sisters of the Visitation. The good sister visited the houses and works of the Oblate Sisters, and returned to Annecy, much edified at the wonders worked by her holy Founder through the medium of his faithful daughter at Troyes. Five days later, the good Mother received the most cordial letter of congratulation from the convent at Annecy. The time, however, was at hand for the accomplishment of that mission, for which during the whole course of her religious life her Saviour had been preparing His faithful spouse. This great and crowning work of her life was the foundation of the

Oblate Fathers of Saint Francis of Sales in the year 1869. Monseigneur Mermillod, seeing his success with regard to the Oblate Sisters, expressed a further wish to Monseigneur Ravinet that there should also be Priests of Saint Francis of Sales; adding, however, that he did not see how this could possibly be brought about. Nevertheless, the two Bishops communicated the thought to the good Mother, and asked her opinion about it. "I think it would be a very good thing," she replied. "Will you pray," said the Bishops, "that it may come to pass?" "With all my heart." This was all she said on the subject during that interview. Nevertheless, she felt interiorly that this was the great object for which God had been training her, and that she was now arriving at the term when the divine promises to her would be realized. Everything seemed to contribute to show forth the will of the Good Shepherd. Monseigneur Ravinet, desirous to continue in his episcopal town a Catholic college which was about to be closed, entrusted its re-establishment to the chaplain of the Visitation.

The college was not long in rising from its threat-

ened ruins. The "Good Mother," seeing in this the copingstone of her spiritual edifice, used all her influence to assist it in its first needs and difficulties.

It was, however, necessary to find a suitable director for the college. One day during Mass, the good Mother was inspired to apply to Saint Francis of Sales at Annecy for the purpose; at the same moment the Confessor, who was saying Mass, was inspired with the same thought. After Mass they made known to each other what had passed in their minds, and it was decided that he should undertake a journey to Annecy, and there, at the shrine of the holy Founder, consult him not only about a director, but also ask for a proof of the divine Will, with regard to the commencement of the congregation of priests.

On arriving at Annecy, his first visit was to the Church of the Visitation, which was then under repair. Scarcely had he entered, than Saint Jane de Chantal, Foundress of the Order, appeared to him, and extending her hands towards the astonished priest, expressed her satisfaction at the foundation of Oblate Fathers, which she said had been the ardent desire

of her life. Falling on his knees, he asked, as a proof of her will, that she would find him at Annecy the director he was seeking for. This apparition filled his soul with inexpressible peace and assurance, and before leaving Annecy, the proof he had asked of the holy Foundress was granted in a most unforeseen manner. Thus it was that the divine Will was made manifest ; the good Mother was about to attain the end and object of her life, and she felt that it was time to commence her work. The first novice was a young priest, who, after devoting himself unreservedly for some time in the college, asked admission into the noviciate. He was soon followed by five others. The congregation was therefore commenced with six, precisely the same number as Saint Bruno had, when he first founded the Order of the Chartreux. The good Mother delighted in this resemblance. Saint Bruno was one of the patrons most venerated by her, and her constant and fervent prayer was, that the congregation might, like that of the Chartreux, remain always so faithful to its spirit that no reform might ever be deemed necessary.

The new Congregation received its first formal

approbation in 1875, and the final approbation in August, 1897. The Oblates of Saint Francis of Sales devote themselves to the various functions of the priesthood, to missionary work, to the direction of Houses of Refuge and to the instruction of youth. In the main, their Constitutions are the same as those of the Visitation Order, which are called by Holy Church "admirable for their wisdom, discretion and sweetness."

These excellent priests have successful missions in South America and South Africa, where they also conduct flourishing schools and colleges. Their first work in the United States was done in New York diocese, whither they came as chaplains to religious communities. At the invitation of the Right Reverend Bishop Monaghan, the Oblate Fathers opened a noviciate and college at Wilmington, Delaware, in September, 1903. They are few in number and not many postulants have as yet been received. "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray, ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into His harvest." (Matthew ix., 37, 38.)

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

HER LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH (1875).

In 1874, Mother Mary de Sales was elected for the eleventh time Superioress of the Convent of Troyes. She felt, however, that her days were numbered, and told the Sisters that her death would take place the following year. For many years past, the good Mother had been a constant sufferer, and during the winter her sufferings, both moral and physical, increased and became intense; but, ever true to her maxim of keeping all between herself and God, she succeeded in hiding them so completely from those around her, that no one realized how near the time was when the supreme sacrifice would be required of them.

In measure, however, as her life was ebbing to its close, she seemed to exact the more from her little remaining strength, and to redouble her fervor and maternal solicitude for the good of her community and conventual observance. In the month of August,

1875, she was compelled to take to her bed, and then began that long illness during which all who approached her beheld a representation of their Crucified Saviour, and learned how the saints suffer. She always retained her strength of mind and evenness of spirit, in the midst of such excruciating sufferings that she may truly be said to have been nailed to the cross with her Lord and Saviour, and, like Him, wholly conformed to the divine Will.

"Thus it was," to quote the words of her Sisters in Religion, "that the virtue and holiness of this humble servant of God shone forth in all their splendor to the great edification of all. It would be impossible to enumerate the graces and lessons of virtue which we received at the death-bed of our Mother; her entire self-forgetfulness, her ardent desire to suffer for souls, her admirable submission to the good pleasure of God, all served as a continual sermon to us. None approached her but with feelings of profound respect, as every one saw the Passion of her Lord, so to say, renewed and continued in her. At times she was so completely lost and absorbed in interior contemplation that she appeared, as it were, wholly transformed. She was habitually

calm and recollected in God, and never preoccupied with her own sufferings."

"On the Feast of the Assumption," continued the Sisters, "our Mother received the Apostolic Blessing of the Holy Father Pius the Ninth, accompanied with words of paternal encouragement and the promise of his prayers. She was deeply sensible of this favor, and the more so, as she had never thought of asking it." On the twenty-first of August, feast of Saint Jane de Chantal, she appeared so much worse that it was deemed advisable to administer the Last Sacraments. Turning to her confessor, she said: "Perhaps it is the moment to make a general confession, but I have no light on the subject. I have ever sought to do only that which I believed to be most agreeable to God." The good priest was deeply touched by these words, which he afterwards asserted were an exact summary of her whole life. After receiving the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, she said to the sorrowing community: "I have ever desired but one thing, namely, to know our Saviour; I have always confided in Him. . . . I go now to Him filled with this confidence. . . . I never wished to act of myself, and I think I can say with

truth that I have never done so, but have always let our Saviour act in me, never doing anything but by His movement. Ah! if one only understood the price of the redemption of a soul!"

She testified the most tender interest in her beloved foundation of the Oblates; it was a great consolation and happiness for her to know that the priests and novices of the congregation increased in fervor, and became ever more and more conformed to the spirit and doctrine of Saint Francis of Sales; and she expressed the utmost gratitude to all those who had in any way contributed towards their establishment.

"I can die now," she said, "since they are founded .... I should much have liked to behold the results of their work, but I prefer the divine Will." Then, turning to the Father Superior, who was present, she said: "You will have to bear the burden alone now, but I will not abandon you; I will help and pray for you. . . Whatever may happen, even if all seems to be lost, be not discouraged, but be sure that it is the Will of God that the Oblates should be established. He will employ them to perform great things in the world; it will be as though

our Saviour were living upon the earth : His action will be seen in them."

On the sixth of October, feast of Saint Bruno, to whom the good Mother had so special a devotion, the last symptoms of death became manifest ; she passed this, her last day upon earth, in profound peace in the midst of the most intense sufferings. Several times she expressed her gratitude to those who had attended her during her illness. Towards evening, the prayers for the dying were recited ; she followed them all, and her countenance assumed an expression of bliss and dignity which it preserved up to the moment when her coffin was closed. A little after midnight, she uttered three loud cries, and then breathed forth her pure and loving soul into the hands of her Creator, in the eighty-third year of her age, sixty of which had been passed in Religion.

The news of her death was received in the city as the announcement of a public calamity. The people flocked in crowds to the Church of the Visitation, in order to gaze once more on the face of her whom they loved and revered as a saint. Her mortal remains were exposed close to the grille of the Sisters'

choir. There, during two days, four sisters were constantly employed in touching these precious remains with crosses, medals, linen for the sick, and other objects, which the piety of the faithful presented for that purpose.

The good Mother was interred in the convent cemetery, where she reposes in the midst of her daughters, and continues, in the silence of death, the instructions of her lifetime. The tombstone is surmounted by a simple iron cross, on which is the following inscription:—"Here lies our venerated Mother Mary de Sales Chappuis, who died in the odor of sanctity on the seventh of October, 1875, aged eighty-two years and three months."

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE TOMB OF THE VENERABLE MOTHER.

On the twelfth of January, 1901, Monsignor Marzolini, Postulator of the Cause of the Venerable Mother, and Monseigneur Pélacot, Bishop of Troyes, addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff, a petition to

obtain the favor of opening the tomb and removing the mortal remains of the servant of God to a vault prepared under a chapel, dedicated to Jesus the Redeemer.

A favorable decree having been given, the seventeenth of May was the "day that the Lord had made" for the solemn ceremony. His Lordship, the Bishop of Troyes, with the members of the Apostolic Commission, Monsignor Marzolini, chaplain of His Holiness Leo the Thirteenth, Monsignor Chabrier and advocate Martini of Rome; three official witnesses: the Admiral de Cuverville, in full-dress uniform, the Count de Cissey, father of the Superioress of the Monastery, and Mr. Ferdinand Frederici, officer of the Pontifical Army; two physicians, Doctor Viardin of Troyes and Dr. Tuilant of Bar-sur-Aube; two Justices of the Peace, the necessary workmen, the Countess Goluchowska, née Princess Murat, wife of the Prime Minister of the Emperor of Austria; the Baroness de Gargan, and Madame Bérard of Lyons, entered the enclosure of the Monastery about eight o'clock in the morning, and proceeded at once to the nuns' choir. After the recitation of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, a procession

was formed to the narrow vault at the entrance of the cemetery, where the Venerable Mother lay at the feet of a statue of our Blessed Lady, holding the Child Jesus. There, Monseigneur Pélacot, Bishop of Troyes, standing with his hand on his breast, administered, first to the physicians, then to the workmen, the oath to fulfil loyally, conscientiously, and truthfully, the mission entrusted to them. After that, the Apostolic Commissaries verified the perfect integrity of the official seals, which were then broken ; the tomb-stone and three flag-stones were raised, bringing to view the leaden coffin, which, by means of pulleys, was drawn up from the grave. Monseigneur Pélacot read aloud the inscription :

OUR MOTHER

MARIE DE SALES CHAPPUIS

PROFESSED OF OUR MONASTERY OF FRIBOURG,
DIED IN THE ODOR OF SANCTITY IN THIS MONASTERY OF THE VISITATION OF HOLY MARY, OF TROYES,
THE 7TH OF OCTOBER, 1875,
AGED EIGHTY-TWO YEARS.

The dampness and dust having been removed, the coffin was placed on a litter, draped with a magnifi-

cent gold-embroidered white satin cover, the work and gift of the Oblate Sisters, who owe their institution to the Venerable Mother. Four Visitandines held the tassels of the cover, and the Oblate Fathers were privileged to carry the remains of their Mother. His Lordship of Troyes reiterated the prohibition against carrying away, or adding any thing to the coffin, under pain of excommunication, then the procession formed again, and soon reached the Community room of the religious, which had been decorated for the occasion with white hangings and golden fleurs-de-lys, with the escutcheons of the friends and protectors of the Cause. The coffin being placed on a large table, the crowd retired, leaving only the privileged few. The leaden coffin was found intact, except in one place, where the solder had given way, but the oaken coffin was, in several places, affected by dampness. The screws of the lid were loosened and the lid raised . . . . . then came a moment of anxious and painful emotion. . . . . a layer of moss and dense white mould entirely covered the body. This was not astonishing as, on the day of the interment of the "good Mother," a heavy rain fell into the open coffin, which, according

to the custom of the Visitation, is not closed until the grave is reached. Then, all whose presence was not essential, were required to leave the room. The covering having been taken off and carefully put away in large vessels, the body appeared *intact* and in a state of *perfect preservation*, though much darkened by time. The ball of the eye no longer existed, but the lids, with their lashes and the eyebrows above, gave the appearance of sleep. The finger-nails were clearly discernible; the arms somewhat stiff, but the flesh on the lower limbs, soft and supple, the color, according to the physicians, being that of "old ivory." Even the traces of the wounds, with which the good Mother was covered at the time of her death, were quite visible. To use again an expression of the doctors, there was observable no smell of death, but only the strong odor of mouldy wood, which escaped from the coffin and clothing. The Sisters and all present were satisfied with blessing God, feeling that it did not belong to them but to holy Church, to pronounce upon the wonderful preservation of these precious remains. The Sisters of the Second Monastery of the Visitation in Paris, having prepared new garments, the Venerable

Mother was clothed with them, and a crown of white roses was placed upon her head. It is even said that the habit and cincture, made of the ordinary size, had to be enlarged, the "good Mother" *having lost nothing in the tomb.*

The physicians made their report, and about one o'clock, all the dignitaries and officials withdrew, after having placed seals on the assembly-room. At half-past two, they returned, removed the seals, and drew up the *procès-verbal.* At seven o'clock, the religious of the Visitation had the last consolation of placing the body in a new oaken coffin, lined with satin. At her feet was placed a sealed glass tube, enclosing the *procès-verbal* in Latin. The oaken coffin having been put into the old leaden one, it was lowered into a vault, under a little oratory, dedicated to Jesus the Redeemer. There, awaiting the final decision of the Church, the Venerable Mother reposes under the eyes of her holy Founders, whose statues, placed on either side of the door, seem to be guarding her precious remains until the much desired day of her Beatification.

SELECTIONS FROM THE "PENSÉES" OF THE VENERABLE MOTHER.

The Making of a Saint.

In order to render due glory to God and gratitude to our Saviour, we must leave it to Him to do in us what He wills, what He pleases, as our Master, our King. This is what the Saints did.

The Saints are Saints, because they allowed the Saviour to reign absolutely in them.

Prayer and the Heart of Jesus.

Our divine Lord bids me say that the imagination of man cannot conceive what prayer can do with regard to the Heart of God. When it reaches that Heart, it changes wrath into loving kindness. When any object is pleasing to God, it disarms His just anger.

We can never believe how easily the Heart of God is touched, if only we use the right means. Prayer

has more power over His Heart than sin ; for prayer has something in it that is divine, sin is only of the earth, though it dares to outrage the divine.

The Desire of the Creator.

The desire of the Creator was that man should live in happiness, without care or anxiety, God doing all, ordering all.

His life was to be indeed a perfectly happy one ; continually thanking God, easily holding communion with God, always looking to God, the good God Himself his sole happiness.

Although surrounded by the benefits of God, man remained closely united to his Creator, sharing his heart with none other, because that heart was right and true. False joys and affections could not enter there, because the Spirit of the Lord enlightened and directed it.

God loved to hold communion with man, because He had created him after His own likeness. This communion was the very end of his creation.

When sin entered into the world, all was changed ; but still the need for this communion lies deep in the Heart of God and in the heart of man.

The Sign of the Cross and the Holy Name of Jesus.

I have been thinking that I shall often make the Sign of the Cross and pronounce the holy Name of Jesus, in order to purify my heart from the stain of its daily faults and to keep up that habit of constant communion with our Lord, that He desires.

Virtue will be given with the Sign of the Cross and with the holy Name of Jesus.

The Joy of leaving God to Act.

Whatever may happen to me, I should like to be able to say: "Oh, Lord, I feel nothing but joy in all that Thou dost; I could not take pleasure in any other thing; I know that I love nothing but what is done by Thee."

The Illusions of the Heart Remedied.

The heart is often a prey to strange illusions; instead of seeking God, it seeks itself and dwells fondly upon its own doings, its own condition; it exhausts itself in perplexed reasonings, in endless reflections, in useless retrospects.

The soul who has risen above herself is set free from these trammels; less knowledge of her own weakness makes her not the least astonished to find bad things in herself; when she sees such, she turns away from them to God.

But, on the contrary, when we are ignorant, we are surprised to find the evil that is in us, because we do not know ourselves; we are fretted and disturbed at the discovery of the blemishes, we weaken ourselves by brooding over the past, we will not accept the humiliation of our own misery, and because we refuse that true humiliation, which is pleasing in the sight of God and brings with it strength and healing, a far worse humiliation, one which degrades us before Him, becomes our portion; because we would not love to be nothing, we are in the end truly *nothing, less than nothing.*

Determination.

We must fulfil our duty with determination.

The Reign of Jesus through Mary.

What does our Lord desire but to draw all hearts to the love of His Eternal Father? What does the

Blessed Virgin desire but to draw the love of those same hearts to her divine Son, so that He may reign over the affections of all men? She longs for the triumph of the Cross of Jesus, on which He offered Himself in sacrifice for the Redemption of the world.

The Divine Will.

It is the divine Will, which brings all good to man on earth, as well as to the Blessed in Heaven. Heaven is in the Will of God and His Will is paradise on earth.

The happiness of man is in doing the Will of God. He who does the Will of God is absolutely happy. He needs nothing more. He rests in that Will, because in it is all good.

Self-Renunciation and Miracles.

The full value of renunciation in the sight of God will be known in Eternity only; one act of self-renunciation is worth more in His sight than many miracles.

It is renunciation of self which brings union with God.

The Shortest Way—the Secret of Perfection.

We must go to our Lord by love: it is the shortest way. The secret of perfection is to cling lovingly to His most holy Will.

Love of God.

Frequent acts of love constantly repeated will warm our hearts and make them glow with the love of God. One act of love made many times over, will strengthen the soul, even if made without much devotional feeling.

If God is Satisfied.

It matters little if we are satisfied in this world or not, if only God is satisfied with us.

Recourse to God.

The Creator loves to see His creatures dependent upon Him for every thing. They are in the right way only when their recourse to Him is habitual.

I see by the light which is given to me that the love of the Creator is extended to the smallest things.

Nothing in Him is great or small, it is the love of God only that makes things great or small.

Providence.

Providence loves to shower benefits upon a creature, who has placed Himself and all that He possesses under this divine shelter, seeking no other help, no other support.

Providence Love to succor those who are deprived of all human aid, those who have discovered their own insufficiency. To such souls, Providence will always be satisfying, because they will always be in the truth.

The Divine Pleasure.

When God finds a soul ready to do His Will, anxious to follow wherever He may lead, He takes pleasure in that soul, and gives her all she asks of Him.

Humility and Confidence in God.

We must say to God: "I am too insignificant, I can see nothing, do nothing of myself, but I have entire confidence in Thee."

Imitation of Mary.

The Blessed Virgin submitted herself in all things to God; she applied herself to fulfil the duties of her state. She served God, she observed silence, but she kept in her heart the lessons she had been taught and meditated on them. Our life should be like hers. It ought to be spent in submission, in dependence, in silence and in the Presence of God.

Saint Joseph.

Our holy Founder says Saint Joseph was *just*, because he adjusted his will to the Will of God. He obeyed God's Will in everything; and if, in the circumstances of his life, his way of looking at things, his ideas, his wishes, ever differed from those of our Lord, he instantly *readjusted* them. Let us imitate this glorious Saint in *adjusting* our wills, inclinations, and desires, to the divine Will.

What is Best for Me.

Our Lord has made it clear to me that whatever event may befall me, it will be what is best for me.

Letting God Decide Every thing.

God does all things well. This consideration makes me love to leave everything to my Saviour. I do not wish to have the least choice in anything, whatever it may be. If we wish to have a choice, it shows we do not know God, for knowledge of God makes us wish to leave every decision to Him.

The Divine Pleasure.

I am content, O Lord, to wait ; my happiness is to submit to Thy good pleasure. I am just as pleased to be deprived of what I want as to have it ; all I desire is to wait Thy good pleasure. The possession of what I desire ceases to be desirable to me, if it be not ordained by Thy Will.

How to Please the Heart of Jesus.

What unspeakable benefits! What a fount of mercy! To prepare ourselves to receive the gifts of a bounteous Creator, is the action which brings the deepest joy to the loving Heart of Him who thinks, desires and does all that He does, only in order to give unbounded scope to His limitless generosity.

Yet how often do we not see Him restrained in this loving purpose! He would give, He could give, and we, ungrateful and unworthy, as we are, hinder Him and, as it were, compel Him to withhold what was intended for us.

I am Sure of God.

Let us leave ourselves absolutely in the Hands of God. Let us say with all our heart: "*I am sure of God.*"

As regards myself, I am indeed sure of Him. This I can truly declare. I desire that this assurance should reach His Sacred Heart and say plainly and simply, *I rely on Thee, without knowing how, only I know that I rely on Thee.*

Confidence.

Lift your eyes to the Saviour and say to Him: "I trust in Thee."

I have a Saviour.

No matter what happens, let us say: "I have a Saviour."

Beloved of God.

The little ones, and all who are little in their own estimation, are always beloved by God.

The Will of God.

In the Will of God, we find all that can perfectly satisfy us; perfect content, repose and tranquillity. The Will of God contains all good in itself. I do not see what is for my own best good, but the Will of God sees it,—that Will which is love, and which sees what is for my good and thinks of it, and directs it to success without any co-operation on my part.

It will matter little to us at the hour of death if we have done our own will, but it will matter more than anything else if we have done the Will of God.

The Sign of the Cross.

Often make the Sign of the Cross. By doing so, we get rid of self, and give ourselves to God. At the "Name of the Father," we give ourselves to the Father: "of the Son," we give ourselves to the Son; and "of the Holy Ghost," we give ourselves to the Holy Ghost.

The Interior Soul.

The interior soul does not dwell on any thing that may vex or disturb her ; she rises above all, and says to all things : "Pass on ! pass on !" All that she has thus allowed to pass by her on earth and in time, she will find again in Eternity, and it will be to her a mountain of merits and of glory in the love of our divine Saviour.

As Jesus Likes Best.

When I desire some little thing in the course of the day, I show it to our Lord and leave it to Him to will and to do as He likes best.

The thought that He knows best then comes to my mind, and at once I leave Him to choose for me, being sure of Him.

The Infinite Mercy of God.

I feel within me a desire to lose no opportunity of asking God to manifest His goodness, for that would be depriving Him of what He loves best. Being what He is, He can do nothing but what is good ; it is God's nature to do good. He wishes to do us

good for His own sake. The good He wishes to do us in Himself shows His infinite mercy.

We can never comprehend what the goodness of God really is, His attributes are beyond our understanding and we make great mistakes about them; therefore, we must simply say "yes" to all He asks of us and leave His unsearchable goodness to act as it will.

Hovering Around the Saviour.

To hover around any one is to try to see what he thinks, what he says, what he does, what he asks, what he desires, what he loves; it is an occupation wholly and most closely connected with his person. Well! such ought to be our occupation with regard to our divine Lord, keeping near Him, observing closely what He has loved, what He has done, what He would do, if He were here.

Humility and Obedience.

The soul's chief care should be to humble herself and to obey; that being done, we may pass from this life to the next without any fear.

Being Nothing.

Now, at this present moment, I acknowledge my happiness in being nothing; in spite of the fears which my responsibility would bring with it, thanks to my nothingness I am entirely secure.

Nothing brings nothing; nothing is asked of nothing; nothing passes everywhere, has nothing to lose, nothing to gain; none are jealous of it; none are envious of it; it is happy, free, well-ordered. It will never be told to go down lower, or to give its place to another. It has found the great secret of peace and rest.

Confidence in God.

I would that I could make every one have confidence in God; I would that I could instil this truth into every heart. There is no rest to be found in anything but this; outside this all is chaos and confusion.

All is wanting to man, if he has not that; with that, he has all. With confidence, the soul proclaims itself happy; it knows not how to account for this happiness, but it knows how to profit by it, and to

strengthen itself by the knowledge of God. In order to please our Lord, we must have in Him a confidence equal to the goodness and kindness, which we see in Him. He has, so to speak, done the impossible, we must hope to do the same.

The creature cannot rest unless it has confidence in God.

Last Words.

I have always trusted in the Saviour; I have nothing else to carry to Him; I go to Him with confidence.

Decretum Basileen Seu Trecen Beatificationis et Canonizationis Ven. Servæ Dei Mariæ Franciscæ Salesiæ Chappuis, Antistitæ Monasterii Visitationis In Civitate Trecensi.

Quo acrius inimici christiani nominis fremunt ac insaniunt adversus eos qui evangelica consilia profitentur, eo suavius Deus amorem et spiritum Christi in Ecclesiæ sinu excitat ac fovet; adeo ut hæc admirabilis mater divinam ac perennem fœcunditatem sanctitatemque suam confirmet. Inter præstantiores moniales Ordinis Visitationis B. M. V. recensenda est soror Maria Francisca Salesia Chappuis cuius vita, ceu Dei benedictionibus præventa et sanctitate decorata, publico testimonio cohonestatur. Hæc Dei ancilla die 16 iunii, 1793, in oppido vulgo *Soyhieres* Basileensis diœcesis, in lucem edita et baptizata imimposito nomine Maria Teresia, a piis parentibus et ub avunculo, ipsius oppidi parocho, pietatis et religionis principia hausit. Octennis ad sacram synaxim admissa, anno ætatis duodecimo Friburgi Monialibus Visitationis excolenda tradita est. Post

quatuor annos expolitior effecta ac domum reducta, frequenter et studiose sermones de rebus sacris audiebat a presbyteriis ibi degentibus, qui studia ecclesiastica Romæ in Collegio Germanico Hungarico rite peregerant. Quum ad annum ætatis suæ undevicesimum pervenisset Maria Teresia semel atque iterum monasterium Friburgensi ingressa est, atque ubi olim alumna dein soror reddita, opitulante Deipara Virgine, suscepto nomine Francisca Salesia, sui sancti Institutores spiritum ac regulam observare sategit, et Neœpiscopo Friburgensi Tobia Yenny sacris operante anno 1816 religiosa vota nuncupavit. In eodem monasterio novitiarum magistra electa fuit, et quæ ab eius ore sive præcepta sive monita regularis disciplinæ acceperant discipulæ, ea secreto conscripserunt sanctæ custodiendo ac fideliter dispensando. Pluribus monasteriis visitationis, præsertim Trecensi, Parisiensi, Metensi aliisque successive, ipsis rogantibus sororibus, præfuit. Trecensi monasterio anno 1844, restituta, ibi usque ad vitæ exitum, quasi lucerna lucens et ardens in domo Dei refulsit. Ampliata religiosa domo, ephebeum quod confluentes ex omni Gallia puellas nobilitate, moribus ac ingenio illustres excipiebat, reformavit atque

auxit, et extra monasterii septa puellis egenis instituendis scholam aperuit. Ad ancillam Dei conveniebant viri ac mulieres in asperis atque arduis consilia, opem, solatium exquirentes. Plures a Gallicanismi temeritate, a Magnetismi superstitione, a Iansenismi reliquiis retraxit. Sacras disciplinas quas ipsa a puris fontibus delibaverat, cum sui animi gaudio bene fundatas vidit in Trecensi maiori Seminario, una cum instaurata alumnorum frequentia ad sacram synaxim et sanctæ Ecclesiæ Romanæ liturgia. Piis ac religiosis utriusque sexus consociationibus etiam adlaboravit, præsertim Oblatorum a S. Francisco Salesio quorum institutionem iampridem prænuntiaverat a se perficiendam antequam e vita migrasset. Quibus omnibus confectis, ancilla Dei tempus resolutionis suæ instare percensit ; et reapse labente anno 1875, ætatis suæ octogesimo tertio, lethali morbo correpta et extremis Ecclesiæ Sacramentis communita, adstantibus et collacrymantibus sororibus, ineunte die 7 octobris piisime obiit. Fama sanctitatis quam in vita soror Maria Francisca Salesia acquisierat, post obitum ita longe lateque diffusa est ut super ea Processualibus tabulis a Rmis Ordinariis Friburgensi, Basileensi, Trecensi et Parisiensi rite adornatis et

Sacræ Rituum Congregationi exhibitis legitimeque apertis, enixe postulatus fuerit ad ulteriora processus.

Itaque ad enixas iteratasque preces R̄mi D̄ni Nazareni Marzolini huiusce Causæ Postulatoris etiam nomine Sanctimonialium Ordinis Visitationis porrectas, attentis præsertim litteris postulatoriis plurium Emorum et R̄morum S. R. E. Cardinalium ac multorum R̄morum Sacrorum Antistitum nec non virorum sive ecclesiastica sive civili dignitate illustrium, prævia Apostolica Dispensatione ab interventu et voto consultorum super Dubio introductionis Causæ in Congregatione Ordinario proponendo. E̅mus et R̄mus D̄nus Lucidus-Maria Parocchi, Episcopus Portuensis et S. Rufinæ, eiusdem Causæ Relator, in Ordinario S. R. C. Conventu subsignata die ad Vaticanum habito, sequens dubium discutiendum proposuit nimirum: "*An sit signanda Commissio Introductionis Causæ in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur?*" et sacra eadem Congregatio, post relationem ipsius E̅mi Ponentis, omnibus mature perpensis et audito R. P. D. Ioanne Baptista Lugari Sanctæ Fidei Promotore, rescribendum censuit: "*Affirmative seu signandam esse Commissionem, si Sanctissimo placuerit.*"—Die 27 iulii, 1897.

Quibus omnibus Sanctissimo Domino Nostro Leoni Papæ XIII. per infrascriptum Cardinalem Sacræ Rituum Congregationi Præfectum relatis, Sanctitas Sua Rescriptum Sacræ ipsius Congregationis ràtum habens, propria manu signare dignata est Commissionem Introductionis Causæ Venerabilis Servæ Dei Mariæ Franciscæ Salesiæ Chappuis, iisdem die, mense et anno.

CAMILLUS, CARD. MAZELLA,
S. R. C. Præfectus.
DIOMEDES PANICI,
S. R. C. Secretarius.

TRANSLATION OF THE DECREE.

DIOCESE OF TROYES AND BÂLE. CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD, MARIE FRANÇOISE DE SALES CHAPPUIS, SUPERIORESS OF THE MONASTERY OF THE VISITATION, OF THE CITY OF TROYES.

The more agitated are the enemies of the Church, the more they let themselves loose with rage against

those who profess the evangelical counsels, the more God raises up and develops in all sweetness the love and spirit of Christ, in the bosom of the Church. Thus it is that this admirable Mother affirms her sanctity, her divine and perpetual fecundity.

Among the most remarkable religious of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, must be reckoned Sister Mary Francis de Sales Chappuis, whose life, prevented with divine benedictions and illustrated by her sanctity, is glorified by the testimony of the people.

This servant of God was born on June sixteenth, 1793, in the village of Soyhières, in the diocese of Bâle. She was given in baptism the name of Mary Teresa, and received from her pious parents and her uncle, curé of the village, the first principles of piety and religion.

At the age of eight, she was admitted to Holy Communion and, at the age of twelve, she was entrusted, in order to be educated, to the religious of the Visitation of Fribourg. After four years, having completed her education, she returned home. There she listened often, and with ardor, to conversations upon sacred subjects, held by the priests of the coun-

try who had pursued the full course of ecclesiastical studies at the Germanic college in Rome.

Attaining the age of twenty-one, Mary Teresa entered a first, then a second time, the Monastery of Fribourg. And in this Monastery, in which she had formerly been educated, and to which she returned to become a religious, with the help of the Virgin Mother of God, after having received the name of Mary Francis de Sales, she strove to observe the spirit and the rule of its holy Founder. In 1816, she pronounced the Vows of Religion, in the hands of Monseigneur Yenni, the new Bishop of Fribourg, who presided at the ceremony. She was chosen in the same Monastery the Mistress of the Novices. Her novices, unknown to her, consigned to writing the precepts or counsels, regarding regular discipline, that they received from her lips, kept them holily and communicated them faithfully.

She governed several Monasteries of the Visitation, and especially those of Troyes, Paris, Metz, and others successively at the request of the Sisters.

Returning to the Monastery of Troyes, in 1844, it was there that, to the end of her life, she shone as a bright and burning lamp, in the house of the Lord.

After having enlarged the Monastery, she reformed and increased the boarding-school, which received young ladies distinguished for their birth, qualifications and intelligence, who came from different parts of France. Besides, she opened, outside the enclosure of the monastery, a school for the education of poor young girls. Men and women had recourse to the servant of God to ask of her, in difficult and painful affairs, advice, aid and consolation. She diverted several persons from the rashness of Gallicanism, from the superstitions of magnetism and the dregs of Jansenism.

The holy teachings, which she had drawn from pure sources she was happy to see well established at the Grand Seminary of Troyes, as well as frequent Communion among the pupils and the liturgy of the Holy Roman Church.

She also gave her help to several pious and religious associations of men, as well as of women and, most especially, the Oblates of Saint Francis of Sales. She had announced that their foundation would be completed by her before her death.

After having accomplished all these things, the servant of God had the very clear consciousness that

her death was near, and in fact, at the end of 1875, at the age of eighty-three, she was attacked by a mortal illness. Fortified by the last Sacraments of the Church, surrounded by her Sisters in tears, she died most piously on the seventh of October, at one o'clock in the morning.

The renown for sanctity that Sister Mary Francis de Sales had acquired during her life, was spread in all quarters, after her death, so that the processes having been canonically instituted by the Right Reverend Ordinaries of Fribourg, Bâle, Troyes and Paris, then presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites and opened according to the rules, it was earnestly asked that the ulterior formalities should be proceeded with.

For this reason, on the eager and repeated petitions of the most Reverend Lord Nazareno Marzolini, postulator of this cause, petitions presented also in the name of the Religious of the Order of the Visitation, in consideration particularly of the postulatory letters of several most Eminent and most Reverend Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, of numerous Right Reverend Bishops, and of persons, ecclesiastic as well as civil, illustrious by their rank; after an

apostolic dispensation from the intervention and the vote of the Consulters of the Doubt to be proposed in the ordinary congregation, relative to the introduction of the Cause, the most Eminent and most Reverend Lord Lucidus Maria Parocchi, Bishop of Porto and Saint Rufina, Deponent of the same cause, in the ordinary Congress of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, held in the Vatican, the day hereafter mentioned, proposed the discussion of the following Doubt: "*Is there reason to sign the commission for the introduction of the Cause, in the case and for the purpose in question?*"

And the same Sacred Congregation, after the account of the same most Eminent Deponent, after having maturely considered all things, and having heard the Reverend Father Dom John Baptist Lugari, Promoter of the Faith, was of opinion to answer: "*Affirmatively, and there is reason to sign the Commission, if such is the good pleasure of His Holiness.*" The twenty-seventh of July, 1897.

A report of all this having been addressed to His Holiness Pope Leo the Thirteenth, by the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, His Holiness ratified the rescript of the Sacred Congre-

gation and, with his own hand, deigned to sign the Commission for the Introduction of the Cause of the Venerable Servant of God, Mary Francis de Sales Chappuis the same day and the same month, of the same year.

CAMILLE, CARDINAL MAZZELLA,
Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.
DIOMEDES PANICI,
Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

THE END.

RC-12

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